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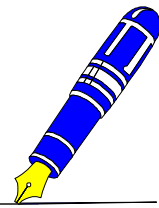
We welcome your submissions!

Contact the editor at

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A Note From the President



Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

— Habit 5, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Stephen R. Covey

People often ask me who my most difficult clients are. Without hesitation, my answer is “couples and families.” One-to-one, my individual clients and I can have pretty rational, **productive (in my opinion) conversations. But when his or her Dear Spouse, Dear Parent, or Dear Child enters the conversation, I suddenly feel like the little white ball in a heated game of ping-pong.**

Each of the family members is trying to get his or her point across to the other family member. Each person is trying to win me to his or her side. Neither family member is listening to what the other person has to say. And I, the ping-pong ball, can't get a word in edgewise.

I recently listened to a CD by Monica Wofford called “Contagious Communication.” She offered numerous examples of how we human beings can misinterpret other people's behavior. How about that man who cut you off when you were driving to your client's house this morning? You say to yourself such things as: “How rude!” and “Stupid people like that shouldn't be allowed to drive.”

Alternatively, you might think that your own driving behavior prompted his actions: “That guy probably thought I was driving too slowly and making him late.” The same **interaction can be interpreted in many different ways, and can have vastly different results.**

Ms. Wofford offered a different way of interpreting someone's behavior when it is not to our liking. She suggested that, instead of finding that driver's actions frustrating, we instead find them fascinating. When we are fascinated by something, we want to learn more about it. “Wow! That guy is sure in a hurry. I wonder where he's going today?” **Fascination makes us focus on the other person, instead of on our reaction to the other person's behavior.**

Both fascination and frustration are “contagious.” If you were frustrated by the other driver's actions, what type of attitude did you spread to your client when you arrived at his or her home? **Harried? Grumpy? Angry? On the other hand, if you chose to be fascinated by the other driver, you were more likely to arrive with a calmer, more pleasant demeanor.**

We can be models of contagious communication techniques between family members, too. Whenever we ask a client to “tell me more about that,” we communicate how much we value that person. When we can accurately re-state a client's thoughts and desires, **we communicate that we do understand his or her point of view. And when Dear Spouse, Dear Parent, or Dear Child is watching, who knows? Our communication just might be contagious.**

Speaking of communication, I want to thank each of you who took the time to complete the 2011 ICD subscriber survey. The Board of Directors is in the process of “listening” to your praises, concerns, and suggestions, and incorporating many of them in the strategic plan. You'll hear more about this in the coming months.

Meanwhile, please know that we always welcome your thoughts — and your participation — in ICD. Simply call or e-mail headquarters or any Board member.

Kathy

Our mission is to benefit people affected by chronic disorganization. The ICD explores, develops, and communicates information, organizing techniques, and solutions to professional organizers, related professionals, and the public.