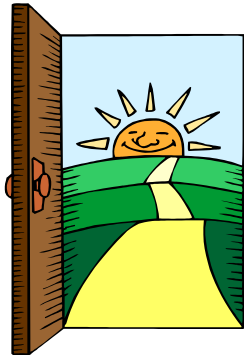


THE SIMPLE LIFE

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Improving your Relationships



Simplicity Life Coaching Ltd.

Helping you de-stress, simplify and re-prioritize your life through better understanding of yourself and others.

Hi there. Yet another month has passed and for those readers in the Northern Hemisphere we're at last approaching summer!

I always love writing these newsletters. As I review the material I have and do research I increase my knowledge and crystallize some of my thoughts and ideas. The theme for this month's newsletter is improving your relationships. Listening is a big part of this – and it's something that's especially important as a coach; listening not just for the words but the meaning behind them...

You'll notice that this newsletter is about how you behave with others. How quickly can you start to see results using these techniques? Well try them out and see!

Simplicity Life Coaching offers coaching and (soon) workshops to help you simplify, de-stress and re-prioritize your life. Contact details are at the bottom of the newsletter to answer any questions you may have, for more information about coaching or simply to arrange a complimentary session.

Emma-Louise.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

"Listening is a hug you give with your mind."

Thanks to Barbara Nixon for that one!

"The Listener Within"

We are taught to read, write and even speak correctly at school, but one key skill that can really improve the quality of our lives is not taught... listening. Being a good listener can win you friends, further your career and improve your relationships. Listening can make a person feel so good about being with you that they'll literally follow you - anywhere.

Listening is not just hearing what the other person is saying, but really FOCUSING on them. An old saying states we have two ears and one mouth for a reason – we should be listening twice as much as we talk!

"Listening is as important as talking. If you're a good listener, people often compliment you for being a good conversationalist." Jesse Ventura

We have all heard statistics that say that 70-90% of our communication is non-verbal. If we aren't respecting what someone is saying there will probably be negative thoughts in our minds that will show through in our body language and signals.

Respecting what a person is saying is therefore key to being an excellent listener: If you listen with respect, you're listening with an open mind and paying the talker a big compliment!

Another area is to validate what the person is saying and to make them feel good about what they have said, even if you don't agree; "that's a great point, I'd not thought about it like that" or "it sounds like you're having a tough time right now". Now you're demonstrating that respect verbally as well!

"Silent and listen are spelled with the same letters!" Unknown

The final area I wanted to share with you is silence – both externally AND internally. Sometimes we get tied up in personal thoughts and questions which direct our attention away from our speaker. After all, part of our programming is to survive and this means always asking, "What does this mean for me?". However, when we listen 100% to what they are saying we are more likely to notice their unconscious signals and gain more information than just the words: Maybe they are tired, angry, excited – and when you replay this back to them with validation you're showing you've REALLY listened to them.

Respecting, validating and 100% focusing on someone can be challenging. It takes effort, and it's something everyone has to work at. Yet it is so worthwhile because it makes people feel understood – how rarely that happens these days. And when you get a "Wow, you really get me" or "Thanks, that really made my day" you'll know you're on the right track!

"Nothing increases the respect and gratitude of one man for another more than when he is heard exactly and with interest." R. Umbach

RECOMMENDED READING

1. **Families and How to Survive Them**
Robin Skinner & John Cleese ISBN: 0749314109
An excellent, fun, easy to read book that gives us an understanding as to how we ended up the way we are, what draws us to certain people, how we can improve! And yes it is THE John Cleese.
2. **How to Win Friends and Influence People**
Dale Carnegie ISBN: 0671027034
I am re-reading this book right now and had forgotten how much useful, simple advice there is in here! Plenty of examples! Still a best-seller nearly 70 years after it was first written. Enjoy.
3. **Friends & Enemies**
Dorothy Rowe ISBN: 0006530583
Only part-way through this one. My favourite insight so far is that - we don't make friends, we identify them! An investigation into ourselves and why we need both friends and enemies.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

<http://www.lhj.com/home/Relationship-Tips.html>

Variety of interesting articles on different types of relationships and things we can do to improve them.

There is no such thing as... "Try"

The word 'Try' implies a risk of failure. When we use this word the chances are that on some level we are not being totally honest either with ourselves or others.

Yes, sometimes 'try' can be useful - perhaps when someone really won't take no for an answer... And yet there are many occasions when we're avoiding a decision or commitment and everyone would be better served if we made a choice - one way or the other.

Maybe you'll start to listen out for how often the word 'try' is used when really people are avoiding saying, doing, acknowledging or committing to something.

When you find yourself using 'try' you could ask yourself "What is the hidden message here, what might I be avoiding?". Once you've identified the reason behind not saying 'yes' or 'no' you are able to make a decision. And with this honesty you will be improving the integrity of your relationships - whether with yourself or others.

THOUGHT: Yoda from Star Wars says "Do, or do not. There is no try". What a wise little creature.

THOUGHT: If its not an absolute 'Yes', it may better to say 'No'. If your mind is elsewhere - then maybe that's where you belong too!



LISTENING EXERCISE

Next time you're having a "one-on-one" with someone try applying these principles and see what happens:

- ☆ Focus your attention 100% on the other person - be with them WITHOUT thinking what it means for you or how you're going to respond.
- ☆ Listen for what is NOT being said (concerns, hopes, anger, frustration, excitement).
- ☆ Listen with RESPECT and an open mind. FIND the positive in what they are saying and acknowledge it.
- ☆ SHOW you have listened, try "it sounds like you're having a hard time" or "it seems like you're really excited about that."

This exercise is about having no personal agenda and putting the other person first, try it and see!

Relationships.

*Without them life would be pretty dull.
When you really begin to **value everyone**
around you the positive effect this can have on
your life is amazing!*



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REMEMBER

Our relationships and experiences with people are influenced by how we behave - we cannot change others' behaviour but we can change our own.

5 ways to have more impact instantly:

1. Be truly PLEASED to see people! SMILE as you make eye contact. Genuinely. Warmly. From within. Who doesn't want to feel that someone is pleased to meet/see them?
2. Look for the POSITIVE in people, notice it, then acknowledge it. Who doesn't love to receive a compliment?
3. LISTEN with interest. Who doesn't want to feel they are interesting?
4. BELIEVE each person is behaving to the best of their ability at that time - if they could think of a better way, they'd do it. Who is truly perfect? We all need to be 'given a break' sometimes.
5. Use their NAME eg. "Pleased to meet you Emma", "So Emma, tell me...". If you don't know it, find out (name badges useful here). If its difficult, ask how to pronounce it correctly.