

THOUGHTS ON EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP

by Karl Pister



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Is There Anyone She Can't Connect With?

I am sitting in the boarding area waiting for a flight back to the Northwest. I am listening to my wife setting up some shipping of some furniture and other large items from my father's estate.

I married extremely well to a very wise woman who has taught me quite a bit over the past thirty-seven years.

She is a natural in some areas, and connecting with people is one of those. On more than one occasion, when the children were small, we would be out shopping via the 'divide and conquer' model.





As the children gathered, the “where is Mom?” question would come up.

Them: Oh, she is talking to the check-out person...

Me: Does she *know* the check-out person? (emphasis appropriate then and now)

Them: No. She just had pretty nails and Mom asked her where she had them done....

Me: oh...

And then there was the time that she was on the phone with our cell phone carrier, who had again raised our monthly rate without our consent or knowledge, and she was trying to resolve the issue. I was in and out of the house during the call.

When I left the room for a moment, they were debating, a bit, over the small print.

When I came back to the room I heard the question from my wife:

*Is that rain in the background?...*and suddenly she was talking about the hurricane moving through south Texas. As I continued to listen, the conversation moved back to the billing concerns and by the time she got off the



phone, we had a retroactively adjusted bill that saved us hundreds of dollars.

And her patience with telemarketers is both admirable and humbling.

"They are only doing their job"...is nothing that ever crosses my mind. I was not in the 'patience line' in Heaven.

So back to the current phone call. If it were me, I would cut to the chase and only pursue the necessary details. The five W's. Who, what, when, why, where...and how much?

Her? She always asks the person's name. She will weave in details, as she just did, on the background of what she is needing. She will ask some questions of the person on the other line. For example, this person, I am supposing, is from the Seattle area, because she was just saying how much she likes that part of the country, and yes, it has been hot down where we live also.

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH GETTING A BETTER PRICE ON THE SHIPPING CONTAINER!?!?

Well, apparently, quite a bit. She, without negotiating much at all, just got us a fairly good deal. Not enough evidence for you?

I can concede that, to a point...but stay with me here...



You see, if it were me....these would be my thoughts...*I just need to get this off of my agenda, and the sooner the better. I board in fifteen minutes, I know what I want, and, if it isn't quite obvious, I am paying them...so...why make a connection with someone I will never meet?!*

Now, I am being a bit sarcastic and I do know enough about human dynamics to know that the above reaction, in the long run, will get me nowhere. However, does it sound familiar to anyone out there?

Do we put our personal agendas, which are hard to argue with, ahead of the relationships that will actually further our agendas faster than forging ahead at the moment?

I think the comment of *"how you do anything is how you do everything"* might apply here. I might think that I am more patient in person than with an unidentified customer service representative, but in the long run, probably not.

I can hear some of my fellow patience-lacking comrades questioning if I am going to the softer, less hard-driving side of life. Don't worry, I probably will always have the "are we still talking about this?!?" response as my default programming.

However, the research does not support the "I need what I need and I need it now" approach. It does not justify wasting time on idle chatter, but is connecting with someone for two minutes actually wasting time? The connection actually



allows the person to unconsciously focus in better and you will be the recipient of that increased focus. Further, just test yourself...

Note the thoughts and feelings when you are in 'press your own agenda mode' vs 'take some time and slow down and connect mode'.

How do you enter into the next conversation when you are in your own agenda mode? Don't think that you can get off the phone and then switch gears suddenly. That just won't work sustainably...so can I suggest we intentionally leave it behind?

Be the type of listener, and communicator, that connects, just as an experiment. In the same way you might try a new workout routine, give this a shot.

And let me know your results at either karl@coachinggroupinc.com or on my cell at 503-381-8705. I look forward to hearing from you. And, if this seems just WAY too foreign an experiment, then also get in contact with me so that you can get some traction on this extremely important point.



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Karl Pister, PCC

Leadership Coach

karl@coachinggroupinc.com
(503) 381-8705

