

Your Point of View?

By

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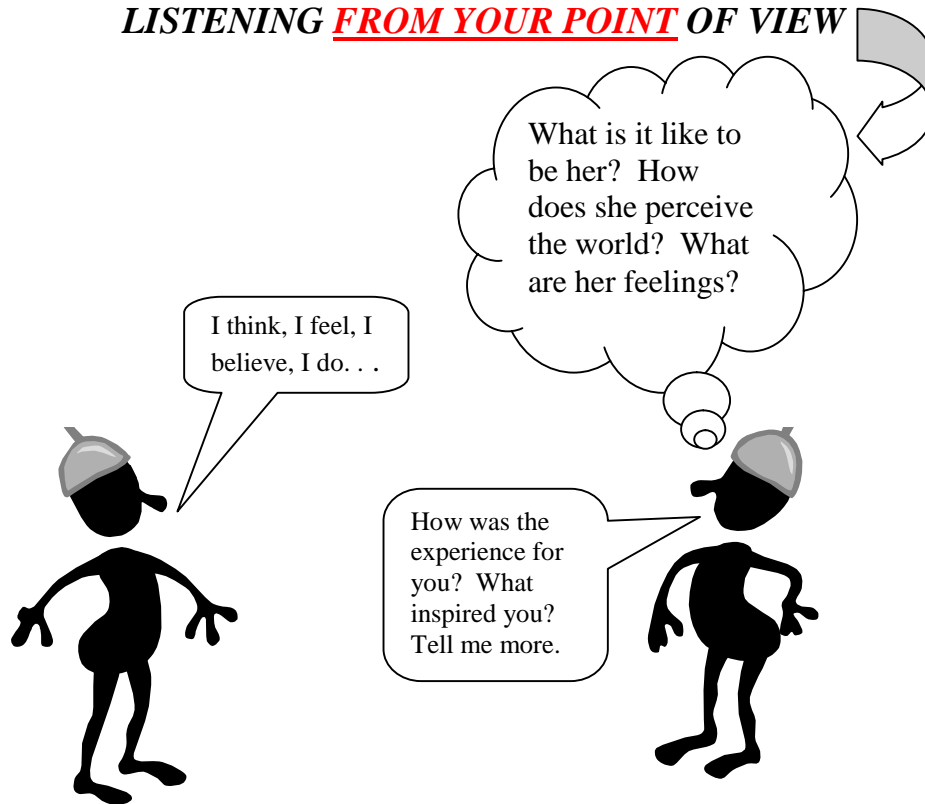
Welcome to the first issue of our monthly *Today Coaching* newsletter, and what a great time to be rolling out the inaugural issue. Lately, when I hear the word inaugural, my mind immediately shifts to politics and the upcoming presidential election. I know, it seems like this campaign has been going on forever, but hasn't it been exciting! Personally, I enjoy a good discussion or debate, but I'm finding not everyone seems to be so invigorated by an eruption of opposing ideas. What I find particularly curious is that often an email with a political message from one of my friends is prefaced with an apology requesting forgiveness if the message offends due to the fact that we might be aligned with different political parties.

I say, "Please, don't apologize for sharing with me what you believe – how else am I going to know you better – and who knows, the conversation may even change my mind!" If we don't open up to other's ideas, then how in the world are we ever going to understand each other?

Beyond the realm of political discussions, what do you do when faced with new ideas from your child, teenager, spouse, partner, or co-worker? Let's imagine your teen comes home from school and tells you he's thinking about getting his eyebrow pierced. Or your co-worker shares with you a new plan she's considering proposing to the boss - you immediately become worried about how this plan will affect your position in the company. Maybe your spouse wants to buy a new car, but you believe your household budget won't support such a big expenditure right now. What do you do upon hearing these propositions? Do you recoil in preparation for battle, poised to defend your position? If you answered yes, you're like most of us, afraid if we don't shout down our "opponent", what will happen? The piercing, the business plan or the new car might become a reality! Well, they might become a reality anyway, but in the process, the relationship has been damaged.

So, how do we move away from our defensive positions? Through respect and listening for understanding. Simple, right? Yes, but not easy. How do we do it? First, take a deep breath, slow down, and put your hand up to your mouth – just a reminder to keep your mouth closed - that you're there to listen, not talk. Then, as the conversation unfolds, keep a curious mind, one that asks questions like, "How did you come to this idea?" or "How do you think this will impact other areas of your life?" Really, what you're doing is trying to find out how the other person sees the world. The conversation looks something like this

LISTENING FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW



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Does it mean you have to adopt the other person's position? No, not at all. It does mean, however, that you accept the other person's position. The eyebrow piercing, the business plan, and the new car might require some negotiation, but first come listening and respect. Give it a try – what have you got to lose!

Next issue we'll take a look at the nitty-gritty of negotiation - how do you hold firm to your values and beliefs while negotiating with someone else? In the meantime, think **RESPECT** and **LISTENING**. Send me an email fran@todaycoaching.com and let me know how it goes!