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Improving the Quality of Your Life

This article is about one of the most powerful pieces of work I do with nearly all my clients. This is the one thing almost anyone can use to immediately improve the quality of their life. It's so powerful that generally I like to run it through with a couple of role-plays before having someone unleash it upon their world. That said, you're subscribed to my e-zine so you've already demonstrated the power of discernment so may the force be with you.

This lesson on boundaries ties in with my last article titled, "How to Say No". If you missed it, read it here.

<http://www.therelationshipgym.com/download/sayno.pdf>

Four steps to Safe Boundaries

The thing about boundaries is that most people feel they've already got them, but my experience teaches me this simply isn't true. If you've ever felt like someone overstepped the mark with you, then your marks just aren't visible enough, which means your boundaries are weak. Boundaries are how we protect our hearts, the things that we hold dear inside ourselves, and they generally need to be much bigger and more clearly defined than we think. My favourite source of inspiration around boundaries comes from the late, great Thomas Leonard who single-handedly created the career we now call life coaching. <http://www.thomasleonard.com>

Thomas came up with a brilliant four-step process for informing people of what they cannot do to you or around you. This article is all about changing the behaviour of those around you and, as such, it requires their agreement. This means that you need to take some time to work out exactly what it is about certain relationships that bug you. As any parent will tell you, it's really worth picking battles that are worth winning. What's the point of getting them to put on their jim jams (pajamas, in case it was just my family) if they refuse to go to bed?

One of my clients, Anita, had a partner with a tendency to raise his voice when they started to disagree and this was a huge problem to her as in her past her father would generally raise his voice before lashing out physically.

For Anita, stopping the shouting was absolutely essential as it generally promoted a quick escalation from disagreement to full blown argument.

In order for this process to work, it's important to sit down with the person concerned and thoroughly discuss it. This is the tricky part as you're about to limit someone's behaviour (at least as far as they're concerned!) You have to pitch it in a way that's attractive. So let's use Anita as an example. You could begin by saying, "You have to stop shouting and you have to stop now." This would go down about as well as a cup of cold sick so let's not do it that way. Far more successful is a gentle sell along the lines of, "Love of my life, I was wondering if you'd like to move our already good relationship into the realms of great relationship, resulting in much more fun and intimacy for the two of us. If I said that all we need to change is one thing, and you don't have to do anything extra, would you be interested?"

In this case, Anita informed her partner that the shouting was very hard for her and informed him that she would no longer be willing to listen, as it just wasn't good for her, or them, to pretend it was healthy. He agreed with her and they lived happily ever after. Hmm... if only life was that simple. After he agreed, Anita moved into the training stage, the four steps to basic behaviour modification.

Step One

Inform them of what they are doing. In this example, "Excuse me, are you aware that you are raising your voice?" Now sometimes that's all it takes, particularly when you've been doing this awhile. The person is surprised and says something like, "Whoops, I'm sorry."

Step Two

Request they stop immediately. "Please stop shouting so we can talk about this." If they stop here then return to the conversation you were having with them.

Step Three

Demand and inform of consequences. "If you don't stop shouting I'm going to go out/ leave the room and we can talk about this later when you're more able to communicate."

Step Four

Walk away. "See ya.." That's it, no flashy put downs or get even comments. This bit requires the most discipline because it's possible that your partner/ work colleague or boss has clearly lost the plot. Act like an adult and leave; over time this is hugely powerful. Even the biggest bully begins to learn that you can't be intimidated into submission and you get to keep your self

-respect.

We all have people who need to be informed that sometimes they do things that leave us feeling hurt. It's important to know that it's your responsibility to let them know, even the psychic amongst us has better things to do than try and second guess what's going on for you.

If you've got someone super stubborn in your life, please get in touch with me. I fix this stuff for a living and you've no idea just how much fun it can be to end it.

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