Identifying Disagreeable and Agreeable Responses

Our fourth tool is BE AGREEABLE. This tool is not implying that you are expected to agree to everything that another is saying. Certainly when you do agree, you need to make that known. Further you need to acknowledge the parts of what is being said where you are in agreement. But really this tool is asking you to be agreeable to another voicing their opinion and that you are listening to every word. For the speaker you are giving encouragement for them to give you a more in depth explanation. You are learning more thoroughly a different point of view. This will better help you to determine more areas of agreement.

First let’s identify some actions and behaviors that will discourage a person to speak. Silence or not responding to something that you have said is disagreeable. I imagine you all have experienced that silence. Whether you are making a request, making a simple daily life statement, or expressing an important opinion, silence is deadening. You have no idea what to do next. You feel totally unaccepted and you are not really sure why.

 There are any number of negative statements that promote disagreement. To say “NO” quickly to whatever you have said arouses many emotions and feelings about yourself- stupid, inadequate, rejected, not listened to, hurt, and angry. Of course there is that proverbial “Yes, but” statement starter. The yes leads you to believe that you are both agreeing. Then you hear “but” and an explanation of your wrong thinking. This evokes those same emotions. A third response is to simply ignore what you have said. Instead they begin to tell you what you should be believing. Finally in some instances you are actually cut down by any number of derogatory names like stupid, totally nuts, idiot, etc .The speaker, having any or all of these negative emotions, is no longer capable of continuing a civil conversation. They will either flee the situation or fight back with their own disagreeable language.

Now let’s look at some agreeable behaviors. There are times when it is difficult for the speaker to find the right words and may pause to think it through. You can recognize that the statement is not complete. This is the time to remain silent which is saying to the speaker that you are in agreement to fully hear what is wanting to be said.

There are many ways to tell the speaker that you have listened and understand what the person has said. The following are a few suggestions when you have understand the other and have another view, but do not care to get into that discussion at that time. “Thank You for letting me know how you feel on this issue.” “I am glad that you shared this with me.” “You have really helped me to better understand your viewpoint.” “Can you tell me more.” “I am sure that it felt good to share.” “Wow, I did not know that.”

There are other times when you want to discuss it further. “I still have some questions and would like to discuss this further.” “Can you tell me some of your life experiences that helped you to come to your opinion.” “You know I had never thought about it in that way and I can see more clearly the complexity of the issue.” “I would like to share with you where we have some real agreements.”

Lastly, there may be times when you need to have some time before you want to have a further discussion. “I have listened to you and really need to think through what you have said to be able to further discuss this. Let’s plan to talk more next week.” “I now see some real areas of agreement, but I want to think this through more for our next discussion.” “With further meetings, I am sure we can work through this.”

Finally there will be times that you will not agree with the person. “I see we have some different views and want us to be able to accept that each of us has a view.”

Being agreeable leads to civil action.

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