

Quality #1: Connecting with People

Intrinsic Validation

The Art of Connection – Part II

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(45) minutes
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Intentional Creation

OG MANDINO FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Intrinsic Validation

The Art of Connection - Part II

Intrinsic Validation is the art of stepping through someone's Wall of Resistance and successfully releasing their reserve of cooperation and productivity.

Share an experience where you became aware of another person's Wall of Resistance.

As you have reflected on The Chicago Dream and the things that we can drag around in our sacks, how successful have you been in engraving these memories on your heart?

How does it feel when you successfully do so?

Share how you have used your personal life experiences as a rich resource to better connect with people?

Share an experience of identifying and verbalizing something that was important to another person.

Share some of the doors that you are hearing.

It is time to move to the next level of connection. Here you will learn to even more effectively use your empathy and intuition.

Principle #4: Create a Safe Place.

The primary objective at this stage of connection is to create a safe place where there is no need for walls.

We want the person to know that we know where they are and we have no need to fix them - we are simply here to understand them. This is best accomplished by listening and when appropriate asking intuitive and empathetic questions.

By the questions we ask, we want a person to privately reflect, "Finally someone understands what I am going through! Finally someone cares enough to really listen to ME!! Thank you!! Thank you!!" This creates a safe place where there is no need for walls.

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As Stephen Covey, one of my favorite authors, often quotes, "Air is to the body what understanding is to the heart."

Consider a moment in your life that was exciting? If someone is sharing a similar experience, what could you ask that would evidence that you know what they were feeling but without telling them your story?

Now consider a painful moment in your life. Do you recall how you felt? Own your experience. What were some of the things you were doing or thinking about?

Did you experience sleepless nights, anxiety, fear, a sense of failure, creditor nightmares, family challenges? Do you ever feel like you've let your family down? Were your children sensing any fear? What impact was it having on your wife (husband, companion, and friends)?

Now imagine someone is sharing a similar painful moment. What is the possibility that this person is doing or thinking similar things? What is your intuition telling you? What questions could you ask that would demonstrate that you know where they are without sharing any details of your experience.

Next time you are in this situation, ask if they are having experiences that were similar to the ones you experienced. If they are not, ask them what they are experiencing.

If you feel stuck just say, "I'm listening." Or "Could you help me better understand _____?"

You may not be on target every time, but the attempt to find out where they are can work miracles. You are engaged and searching and it is discernable.

Our intent should be to convey the following message, "I am truly interested in what you are thinking. I am not here to judge or fix - just to listen and gain understanding. I want to know and truly care about what you are thinking and experiencing."

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In short, we want them to know that we know where they are and we didn't need to fix them. This is creating a safe place - a place where there is no need for walls.

Is it possible that some people may have thought processes that are so guarded that initially it may be difficult to get them to open up?

What could you do or question could you ask to gently knock on their wall in search of a door?

Here are a couple of suggestions:

How should we handle this?

What do you think would be best?

What is your greatest challenge or concern?

Are you okay?

How would you like to do this?

What ideas are brewing in that fertile mind of yours (use this one with a smile, of course)?"

These are not rapid-fire questions. The idea is to ask one of these questions and then be silent. Give the person time to digest, process and feel safe. Just know that the single greatest reason for a person to be shut down is self-protection.

How long would we continue to openly share our thoughts if every time we did, someone tried to fix us or give us advice?

Trust your intuition! To get clear about what a person is actually experiencing very often all we need to do is ask them.

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If they are sharing an exciting event similar to one we have experienced, we may be tempted to share our story. Not here. That is saved for Principle #7. This is our time to listen to "their" stories. If we've had a similar experience, we know what it feels like. We can draw on these feelings and ask them empathetic questions. We will know what to ask, because we've been there.

When we're less sure and want to get clear, we can ask questions like:

How does this show up for you?

When you are in this space, how does it affect you? Help me better understand what impact this is having on you?

A moment ago you mentioned something about _____.

Could you tell me more about that?

I'm just listening. Help me understand even better what you are experiencing when ____.

Or to convey that we don't understand but we do care, we can simply ask, "Are you okay?"

Here is the real secret. If we listen carefully, we may be able to assist a person in finding their own answers to their problems. We can facilitate discovery instead of feeling obligated to give them answers. If we do this, people may choose to listen because they know we have their best interest at heart rather than our own agenda in our heads.

Eventually the person will know that you know where they are and more importantly, that you cared enough about them to find out. Walls will come down. Cooperation and productivity will pour out.

Finally, someone understands me! Someone cared enough to listen!

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As you're talking with people over the next week pay close attention to your thoughts and feelings. Ask yourself the following questions:

How quickly do I jump to conclusions believing I know the answers?

How anxious am I to share my solutions to their challenges?

Do I have a need to tell them or sell them something?

Do I really "get" what's going on for them and truly understand their point of view?

What might I do to be more conscious in the moment and listen for doors and create a safe place?

Whenever you feel frustrated during the journey of mastery of this art remember this question:

"When was the last time someone cared enough about you to step into your world and find out what's important to you, without needing to fix you or tell you their stories?" We've asked that question thousands of times, and there is almost always a moment of uncomfortable silence. For most, this is a rare experience. Most importantly, trust that no matter how poorly you do this at first, it may be the best Intrinsic Validation experience this person may have ever had. The moment you cared enough to say, "Tell me more about that," you set yourself apart from most of society.

Bonus:

There may be times when there is something specific you want to discuss. When that is the case you can keep the conversation in context by narrowing the topic being discussed. To accomplish this you can let people know that you would value their ideas and opinions on a specific topic. This can keep the conversation focused and still let others know that you care about their perspective.

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Explore one or two scenarios where you may want to narrow the context of the conversation yet value a person's opinion and experience within this narrower context.

Principle #5: Try on their dreams

Intrinsic Validation is not about patiently standing in the wings waiting to pounce on someone when it is our turn to share. When we listen for doors, step into a person's world and stay in a person's world until their Walls of Resistance start coming down we will become increasingly aware of their hopes, dreams, desires, needs, challenges, problems and concerns. We will want to honor everything that has been shared.

Before we make any decision about whether or not to share our thoughts or opinions, we will want to be very clear about our intentions. Are we interested in meeting their needs or our own? This is a powerful, pivotal moment. We will want to trust our intuition, without being unduly influenced by our own fears, doubts or impatience. Here are some helpful questions you might want to ask yourself.

Did this person just need someone to listen?

Does this person need something I have?

Could my advice, ideas, suggestions, solutions, products, services etc., bring real value to this person's life or business?

We have entered a sacred space. We will want to be totally focused on bringing real value to the life of this very real person.

Reflect on the dream about the man and his sailboat.

In your personal and professional life, what might be the parallels between "the sailboat in the harbor" that represented this man's dream and the information someone might share with you?

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How might you best honor what is shared while focusing on blessing the life of the person who shared?

How often do we want to just jump in and fix all the problems because we can see them so clearly and believe we know exactly what needs to be done or what would be best?

In what ways could we approach this moment in time differently?

Principle #6: Timing

We have determined that we have something of value to share. Next we will want to ask two questions:

Is this the best time to share or is this enough for today?

Is this person ready, willing and able to hear my ideas and opinions right now?

The point of Intrinsic Validation is about building lasting bridges, listening for doors and especially, creating a safe place where there are no walls. You have created a sacred space; don't run the risk of polluting it by running forward when it is not the right time to do so. When we do this effectively - actually care - bridges that are built last long after the initial conversation. Relationships of trust are created. A day later, trust still survives.

Think of a time when you were considering the purchase of a product and needed a moment to process the information presented. Perhaps you still had a few more questions to explore.

Was the salesperson interested in stepping into your world to make sure this product would be of value to you or was this person more focused on earning a commission?

Did this salesperson care or was it just a thinly veiled attempt to act like they cared?

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Did you experience empathetic questions or premature and well-rehearsed closing techniques?

When you raised a concern, which is often referred to as an objection, did this person ask empathetic questions in an attempt to better understand your position or did they spout well-rehearsed "answers to your objections?"

Did you feel valued in the process or did you feel rushed or even violated?

Did you release or hold back your cooperation and productivity?

Most of us have thought processes that naturally want us to race ahead; even if it is not the best time to do so. We will want to step back and place ourselves firmly in charge of and quiet our unbalanced and sabotaging thoughts. All is not lost if our intuition is warning us, "Wait! Now is not the time." In fact, all could be lost if we shift from listening to sharing at the wrong time.

It may be the right time. It also may not be. Trust your intuition. Timing is everything!

Principle #7: Gain agreement and share

- We have cared enough to see what is important to another person.
- We have verbalized our observations.
- We have listened for doors.
- We have stepped into a person's world.
- We have continued to listen and ask questions based on our personal reference points.
- We have created a safe place where there is no need for Walls of Resistance. Walls have come down.
- We have a clear understanding of what a person is experiencing.

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- We have discovered challenges and problems, hopes and dreams, fears and aspirations.
- We may have possible solutions that could add value to this person's life and we believe the timing is right.
- We will want to gain agreement before we share.

Agreement is initiated by extending an invitation. An invitation will convey the following message, "I have an idea that may assist you. Would you be willing to step into my world and let me share?"

You could also use a modified "feel, felt and found" method. "I think I understand how you feel (your empathetic questions have demonstrated this). I have felt that way, too. May I share what I have found?" This can be modified to use third person. I think I understand how you feel. (Name of third person) felt the same way. May I share what he or she found?

If the person says, "Yes," we have agreement. Metaphorically speaking, we can then take this person by the hand and lead them across the bridge we built and into our world. It is here that we can share our stories, ideas, solutions and products. If it is the right time, the person will willingly come to our world trusting that we are a safe place. Of course, we will want to continue to be just that, a safe place.

On the other hand, if a person says, "No," we may have misread the moment. The temptation may be to push forward anyway believing we have "earned" the right to do so.

Intrinsic Validation is not a linear experience, Principle #1, then #2, then #3, then #4, #5, and now it's my turn to talk.

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This is not about us. It never was about us. It is always about others. We made this decision the moment we consciously decided to step into their world. Whatever we do or say at this powerful pivotal moment, we should not proceed to share our ideas, solutions or products without agreement. Should we continue without agreement, we will be violating this sacred space, undoing all the good we have created and exposing a fatal flaw in our character.

If a person says, "Yes," this is when we share our personal stories and experiences, and in context with the specific needs of this person. We have listened carefully. What part of our story would be most beneficial? What portion of our story would assist this person in better understanding an idea, solution or need for our product? What would add value to this person's life? That is what we share and only that.

If a person says, "No," What can we do? We are still inside this person's world, but are we still listening for doors? **The response, "No," is just another door.** It is time for a question. Please don't ask in frustration. It may sound more like, "Why not?!! Look buddy I have invested too much time in you and this process to be getting a 'no' at this point in the conversation!"

That would be much like grabbing them by the nape of the neck, dragging them into our world, putting them on our workbench and attempting to straighten them out. Be careful. Take a deep breath. Cool down the jets. Get re-grounded in agape love. Put yourself in this person's shoes.

What are the risks of hearing negative self talk if someone says "no" at this point in the conversation? What kind of things might your thoughts try to say to you?

What should you do if you hear an objection?

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Objections are not usually questions that demand an answer. They are usually comments that demand a question. If we are seeking connection, we will step back into this person's world and ask, "Tell me more about that." or "Share with me what you're thinking. What is your greatest concern?" Encourage them to share and as they do, listen for more doors - verbal hints about what this person is really thinking. It may be specific to this door but new and very revealing doors could also open.

Consider a common objection that you might receive and explore some possible Intrinsically Validating questions that could be asked.

This entire discussion regarding Intrinsic Validation can apply to relationships, management, politics, religion, science and sales - anywhere two people attempt to connect. Listening and learning more about how different people view their lives and the issues and circumstances they face will ultimately broaden our perspective and enable us to interact more effectively with many more people.

When you're listening to people do you find yourself quick to have an opinion? Do you allow them to have their own ideas and opinions or do you have a need to fix them or change them? Is the world really going to fall apart if we cannot convince a person in this very moment that they are wrong and we are right? In the week ahead pay attention to how you show up with others.