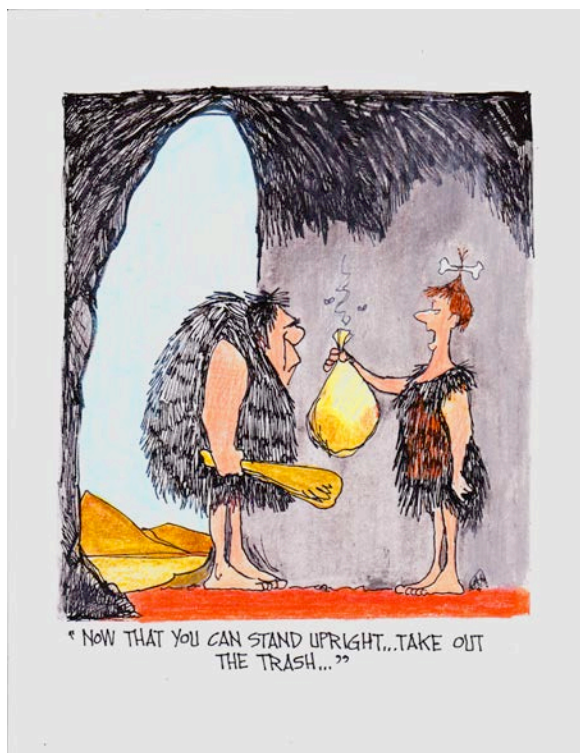


Curiosity Questions

Notice the physiology of what happens when you receive a command. Do you feel your body tense? Do you notice how you want to resist?

Now notice what happens in your body when you are respectfully asked a question? Do you feel more open? Do you notice that you feel more inclined to search for an answer? Do you feel more cooperative?

Couple Activity



1. Make a list of the things you tell your partner to do—things that sound like commands. Write them down.
2. Choose one from your list and write about the last time it happened. What did each of you do and say? What were you thinking, feeling and deciding. Make a guess about what your partner was thinking feeling and deciding. What were the results?
3. Now make a list of the things your partner tells you to do—things that sound like commands.
4. Choose one from your list and write about the last time it happened. What did each of you do and say? What were you thinking, feeling and deciding. Make a guess about what your partner was thinking feeling and deciding. What were the results?
5. Share and discuss what you learned from journaling.
6. For the next two weeks notice how often you *tell* instead of *respectfully asking*. Put a dollar in a jar every time you tell instead of ask. How long do you think it will take to have enough money in the jar for a luxury vacation?
7. Every time you *tell* think of how you could have asked a curiosity question so you'll be prepared for the future.
8. Journal about the results.

Tool Card in Action

We were both ready to start working on this card and I promised myself to have an open and humble mind and heart while going through the process! Hank and I had a good laugh while reading the card the first time! I was reading the instructions out loud thinking, "This is going to be much harder for him as I don't really use *telling* as much as he does!" That's when our 8-year-old son called us asking for one of us to come and tuck him in bed. I turned to Hank and said, "I'll go and put him in bed while you finish cleaning up the kitchen!"

Hank looked at me with an ironic smile and said, "And would you consider what you just said as *telling* or as *asking*, because it makes me feel pretty bad!?"

This card surprised us since, at first, we thought it was a rather simple one! We discovered that we *told* much more than we thought (especially me using, "We need to..." as a way to tell my husband what I was expecting; which would make him feel unimportant and told to!)

We found it very useful to make guesses about what our partner was thinking, feeling and deciding. All our guesses were wrong and the sharing made us feel better *seen* and more aware of each other's perceptions.

The exercise helped us become more aware of how we communicate on a daily basis on little matters can bring strong feelings of resentment, anger, lack of understanding. Using questions helps us change those unwanted feelings into respect, cooperation and a lot of laughter when we slip! Having such a tool, even if quite simple, felt very empowering to us.

We are now in the process of practicing and filling up the jar! Fun!!! Following is what we wrote in our journals.

List of things we tell to each other:

Trisha to Hank:

- "I would love a glass of wine!"
- "Lucas needs help with reading."
- "I will put Lucas to bed while you finish the clean-up in the kitchen."
- "We need to get our winter coats from the storage room."
- "You should call your Mom."
- "It's your turn to do this."
- "We need to change those light bulbs."

Hank feels:

- Put down
- Not respected
- Being told
- "She doesn't take my priorities into account."
- "She ignores my needs."
- "I am tempted to delay my respond or pretend I didn't hear."

Hank to Trisha:

- "Hang up the phone!"
- "Be careful!"
- "Hurry up!"
- "Put this away. I can't stand seeing it in the hallway!"
- "You need to take care of such and such in the house"

Trisha feels:

It makes me feel annoyed, sometimes angry, not wanting to comply. I often end up saying, "Why don't you do it yourself!" "Give me a break" "I know what I am supposed to do," or, "Why me?" When I do what he tells me, I sometimes feel resentful.

Example:

Hank: "Hang up the phone now. We need to go!"

Trisha: Keeps talking, telling her friend that she needs to go.

Hank: Repeats louder: "Hang-up now!"

Trisha: "Yes!" and wrapping up the conversation. Hangs up

Trisha: "You are so impatient! I know what I am supposed to do. I was about to hang up!"

Hank: "It's always the same scenario. You could say the same thing in half the time! You spend so much time on the phone!"

Trisha: "You can be so annoying!" and then gets silent.

Trisha Feeling/Thinking / Deciding

Feeling: Irritated. rushed.

Thinking: He doesn't know that I really needed to place this call. We won't be late; we are always on time. He can be so rigid sometimes!

Deciding: Right now, I'll hang up but I will not make any effort to be nice.

Guess about partner: Hank was probably irritated, worried to be late.

Hank: Feeling/Thinking/Deciding

Feeling: Unimportant' I don't really matter.

Thinking: I am not part of her priorities. She is not aware of my needs or the needs of the situation.

Deciding: I will shout louder and make her feel how irritated I am.

Guess about partner:

She becomes aware that she has been on the phone for a long time. It makes her feel stressed and she doesn't really understand why I push her.

It took a while for Hank to imagine how I could feel. He would keep saying that I was just unaware. We had a nice discussion around our differences.

What we learned from journaling:

Taking the time to journal was for us a way to slow down and think, to look at things from a different perspective, to take the time for things we considered minor. Sharing on very specific situations and analyzing them together was, for us, a great learning experience.

- I realized that I often use, "We need to," and it is perceived as *telling* by Hank. Using a question brings up much better feelings for each of us: I feel more cooperative and he feels more respected.
- We often leave those little matters unresolved even though they happen on a daily basis and bring feelings such as irritation, feeling annoyed or unimportant. We realized that by switching from telling to asking, those feelings could easily be replaced by feelings of being respected, taken into account, cooperation. Becoming aware of this at an experiential level was very useful to both of us. Changing the way we communicate our needs really brings more smoothness to our everyday life.
- Simple tools such as *asking* vs. *telling* make a big difference in the way we communicate about our daily routines.
- We *tell* more than we think we do! We realized it is not something we reserve for our kids! We are just not aware of it; and the funny part is that when we receive an order, we get the feeling but we don't always identify where it comes from! Listening to each other's list was fun and enlightening!
- We learned a lot when we took the time to make guesses about what our partner was thinking, feeling and deciding. It is something that we will try to do more often. Sharing our guesses was also interesting, as we don't always guess right! We both felt seen after doing this.

Trisha and Hank, Paris, France