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Newsletter
March 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE :

-- By Raj Narayan

Earlier this month, I accompanied ISEC Founder Director Krishna Kumar to Kuala Lumpur to attend the APAC Regional Conference of the International Association of Coaching (IAC). During the event and after, I had the opportunity to interact and network with some of the best coaches in the world including IAC President Dr. Susan R. Meyers and Asia's first IAC Certified Examiner Bonnie Chan among others.

What struck me most about their personalities was their keen desire to listen, be it during a 1-on-1 interaction or the more informal dinner conversation. The moment a person took the floor, the others were rapt in attention. Not only were interruptions conspicuous by the absence, I observed that none at the table ever appeared eager to speak before their turn.

Having moved from the media, where my ilk is 'forced to listen' to politicians, bureaucrats, corporate honchos and the like, to the corporate world where bosses love to hear their voice, I felt empowered to be in a group that was eager to listen. The discussions were relaxed as there was no need to get animated – the people around the dinner table were keen to listen... hence you did not have to make an effort to get heard.

After dinner, I ruminated over the conversations and realized that each member at the table was perpetually in the present. The past and the future never seemed to interfere with their thoughts. They seemed to grasp everything around them – that too without any prejudice.

On my flight to KL, I had started reading the book "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle and was finding it difficult to grasp the ramifications. On my way back I made slight progress as I realized the power of being forever in the present.

MENTOR'S MUSINGS – Going behind and Beyond the Words

-- By Krishna Kumar, ISEC Founder Director

*The reality of the other person is not in what he reveals to you, but in what he cannot;
If you would understand him, listen not to what he says but to what he does not say...
Half of what I say is meaningless; but I say it so that the other half may reach you.*

-- Khalil Gibran

This verse from the Lebanese-American artist and poet of the 20th century would reverberate constantly within most coaches. For, a substantial part of coaching conversations involve going beyond a discussion to understand what's behind all the talk.

Recently, while attending the IAC co-sponsored International

Coaching Conference I had the opportunity to “coach a coach.” The coach posed a problem she often faced while talking to clients. A few minutes into such chats, she felt fully engaged with the client but her thoughts tended to drift in the direction of sharing ideas and solutions, derived from her own experience. End result: She often lost the conversation thread.

The answer to the problem appeared obvious, though it was hard to practice. Our short conversation helped her resolve the dilemma and focus on the client’s views and I came out with the strong belief that the solution will become a crucial part of her coaching repertoire in the future.

The IAC Masteries devotes serious importance to the ‘Process of Listening’. It describes it thus: “The coach gives full attention to the words, nuances and the unspoken meaning of the client’s communication; while becoming more deeply aware of the client, their concerns and the source of the issue, by listening beyond what the client is able to articulate.”

In this issue of our newsletter we share with our readers some useful articles relating to listening skills. We welcome your thoughts. Mail us atkk@intradconsult.com



COACHING NOTES: How Do You Listen

Many people define listening as sitting quietly, while another person talks. Most are surprised to learn that listening is actually a 2-way, circular process. Effective Life Coaches understand the listening process, have mastered the techniques well, and employ effective listening skills in all of their communications

Each of us has a personal filter through which verbal information flows. Our filters are based on our unique life experiences, education, culture, religion/spirituality, language, work/career, etc.

A speaker's words are delivered through his/her personal filter. The listener hears those words through his/her own filter (created from their own life experiences, education, culture, etc.) In a coaching session, the Client is the speaker and the Coach is the listener.

The Client's Words

When a client speaks, of course the coach will sit quietly and listen until the client finishes. That's not where listening ends. That's where the listening process begins, and the coach then has an active role to play.

After hearing and processing the client's words, the coach formulates an interpretation of what the speaker said. It is then critical that the coach clarifies that what he/she heard was what the client intended, by voicing that interpretation in his/her own words.

In response, the client either acknowledges the accuracy of the interpretation, or re-frames/re-states the information and the process begins again, until the client and coach achieve a common understanding. Once there, the co-creative coaching relationship is fully engaged.

Whenever a coach fails to clarify his/her interpretation of the client's words, the process breaks down. The

resulting conversation will be based on assumptions, not reality, and the client has not been fully heard and understood.

Nan Einarson is a Mentor Coach and Trainer for the Certified Coach Program.

GUEST ARTICLE: Why I'm a Listener

--By Amgen CEO Kevin Sharer

The biotech giant's chief executive describes the epiphany that made him a better listener and explains why listening is a survival skill for leaders and organizations.

For most of my career, I was an awful listener in almost every possible way. I was arrogant throughout my 30s for sure—maybe into my early 40s. My conversations were all about some concept of intellectual winning and “I’m going to prove I’m smarter than you.” It wasn’t an evil, megalomania-driven thing; it was mostly because I was a striver, I wanted to get ahead, and getting ahead meant convincing people of my point of view.

The best advice I ever heard about listening—advice that significantly changed my own approach—came from Sam Palmisano, when he was talking to our leadership team. Someone asked him why his experience working in Japan was so important to his leadership development, and he said, “Because I learned to listen.” And I thought, “That’s pretty amazing.” He also said, “I learned to listen by having only one objective: comprehension. I was only trying to understand what the person was trying to convey to me. I wasn’t listening to critique or object or convince.”

That was an epiphany for me because as you become a senior leader, it’s a lot less about convincing people and more about benefiting from complex information and getting the best out of the people you work with. Listening for comprehension helps you get that information, of course, but it’s more than that: it’s also the greatest sign of respect you can give someone. So I shifted, by necessity, to try to become more relaxed in what I was doing and just to be more patient and open to new ideas. And as I started focusing on comprehension, I found that my bandwidth for listening increased in a very meaningful way.

Read the rest of the article [here](#)

GUEST ARTICLE: The Art of Listening Well

-- By Eugene Raudsepp

Forget about what you were going to say next. Make sure you hear what the other person says.

A zoologist was walking down a busy city street with a friend. In the midst of the honking horns and screeching tires, he exclaimed to his friend, “Listen to that cricket!”

The friend looked at the zoologist in astonishment and said, “You hear a cricket in the middle of all this noise and confusion?”

Without a word, the zoologist reached into his pocket, took out a coin, and flipped it into the air. As it clinked on the sidewalk, a dozen heads turned in response.

The zoologist said quietly to his friend, “We hear what we listen for.”

Day after day, inside and outside of business, we miss important information because we don’t listen with full attention. We also misunderstand and misinterpret messages and ideas because of our preconceptions, biases, and wishes. Take the manager who dreaded to see his secretary go away for her two-week vacation. When the

secretary told the boss she'd be taking time off, it just didn't sink in. Said the secretary later: "I told my boss three times I was planning on taking my vacation in October. It just didn't register."

Minor slipups in communication can have major repercussions, as any sensitive manager knows. Lack of communication between you and others in your company can not only foul up job assignments and raise the cost of doing business, it can also cause hurt feelings and generally lower morale.

Listening is an art that requires work, self-discipline, and skill. The art of communication springs as much from knowing when to listen as it does from knowing how to use words well. Ask any good salesperson or negotiator about the value of silence. He or she will tell you good listeners generally make more sales and better deals than good talkers.

To sharpen listening skills, you need patience and practice. Here are some suggestions that have helped others become better listeners:

Read the rest of the article [here](#)

EVENTS @ISEC

The **ISEC Executive Coach Certification** program will be held from 5 to 9 June 2012 in Bangalore. Details are available [here](#)

SUCCESS COMPASS, our social initiative is making waves with a lot of Young Professionals benefiting from our coaching. To know more about Success Compass, the affordable career coaching initiative, click [here](#) to know more.

We participated in the **International Coaching Conference** in Kuala Lumpur, which was attended by over 130 coaches from various countries in Asia



The picture below shows the "handing over of the Conference baton" by Shanmugam, IAC Chapter President, Malaysia to Krishna Kumar, IAC Chapter President, India at the conclusion of the conference.

ISEC will host the International Coaching Conference in Bangalore. The tentative schedule is February 2013. Details will be announced soon.

**With warm regards,
Krishna Kumar
Executive Coach & Founder-Director, ISEC**