

Respectful Listening and Change



Real and lasting change begins with listening well. Listening engages us in ways we are not always able to predict. When we listen respectfully, by honoring the humanity in others, we open the door to honesty and relative truths with the understanding no truth is absolute. Listening provides an opportunity to be heard. If I am respectfully listening, I am not critiquing, dismissing, challenging or otherwise engaging in disrespectful behavior. When we respectfully listen, others tend to feel they have been heard and are more often willing to lend their experiences to solving real issues.

To get others engaged try asking questions versus doing so much telling. Then *LISTEN*.

- What do you value? Why is this value so important to you?
- What is important to you?
- What do you wish were different?
- What do you fear?
- How will you help make this wish come true?

Why don't we listen respectfully?

We move around in our worlds at breakneck speed. We don't have time to notice the good things going on around us nor do we have time to see beauty in the simple things we pass on our speedy journeys. Because we move so fast we miss smelling fresh cut grass, watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or even seeing the simple yet complex beauty of a rose.

We are moving too fast most of the time. We are not taking time to get to know each other, listen to each other or help each other. Family, friends and neighbors are sad, hurt, lonely, angry, and in emotional and psychological pain; yet we are too busy to even notice ... much less help.

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When good things happen in our lives (and good things do happen to us) we are rushing so, goodness gets buried in the negativity brought on by the dizzying pace in which we live.

It's timeSLOW DOWN and take the time to live well. It's okay to laugh and love and listen and share. Get your life back. No one should be alone in the world So we have to find time to look around and commit ourselves to seeing the world through the lens of community ... not individualism. In order to do this, we have to stop making excuses for why we don't take time to engage in community. We have to stop making everyone who is different the bogey man or woman. It is irrational, and as the character Mr. Spock would say, it is illogical to expect everyone to share our values, beliefs, and life's experiences. Here is a fact for you. We are ALL different – get over the insanity of dichotomies: I'm right and you are wrong; we're good and those people are bad; she's smart and he is dumb. It is long past time we learn to listen respectfully.

Listen in order to embrace complexity and better deal with the randomness of change. Listen in order to share in the goodness life brings us but we are too rushed to recognize it. Listen in order to see where the universe may be asking us to go or informing us on what to do or where we could be. Listen ... until it hurts. You may be surprised at what you hear.

About the author:

Dr. Linda Burrs is the CEO and Principal Consultant of the *Step Up to Success!* consulting firm that focuses on **Second Generation Diversity Training™** and inclusion strategies. For more than 25 years, Dr. Burrs has brought her rich dynamic approach to the corporate and professional training arena. The breadth of her experience crosses all walks of social and organizational life including law firms, technology organizations, educators, business professionals, leadership groups and non-profit groups.

Dr. Burrs is the author of the book: *The Fruits of Inclusion™: A Smart Business Guide to Creating a Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion Program*. The book is available on www.barnesandnoble.com, www.amazon.com and www.DrBurrs.com. She is also the author of the Second Generation Diversity Training™ program series. For more detailed information on available programs, please visit: www.DrBurrs.com. Dr. Burrs is a sought after public speaker and presenter for her deep expertise and engaging programs. You may contact her at: Linda@DrBurrs.com or 937-866-7511.

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