



Leadership Tips
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**Give the
Gift of
Presence**

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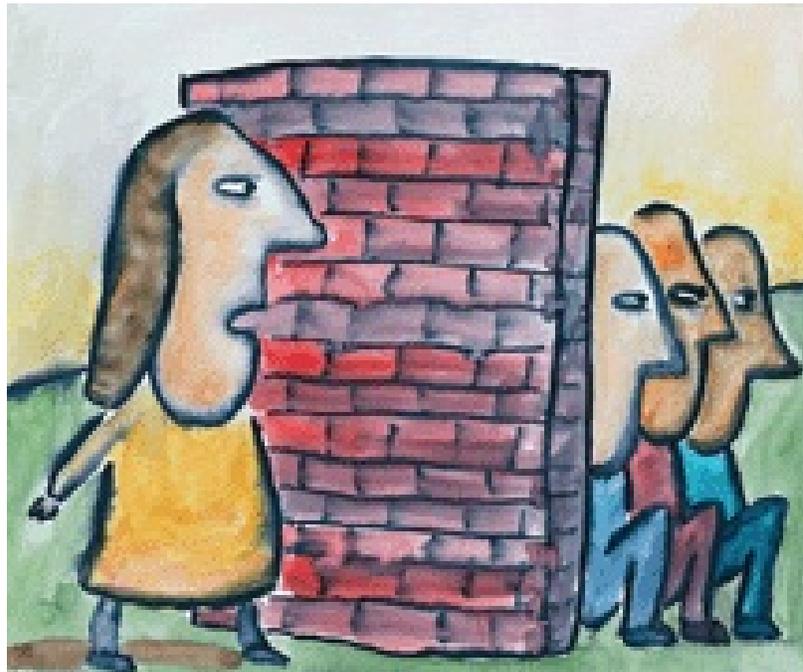
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**Let Presence
Be Your Present**

Season's Greetings!

They say wherever you go, there you are. Yet how present are you at any given time and place you find yourself? Especially at this wonderful time of year, are you able to give the gift of presence to your co-workers and direct reports, family and friends?

In December more than most months, we're pulled in so many directions. As leaders at every level, we rush from commitment to commitment and event to event, often appearing in body but little else. Don't get marked as missing in action. Leaders need to be present. Are you showing up, in the moment?

Recently we encountered the following professionals missing in action:

Out of Tune

This week our local mail carrier arrived each day, wearing her iPod and delivering our neighbors' mail to us. She's in her own world. She dumps the mail in a pile each day. In addition to our mail we consistently receive mail from our neighbors up and down our street, as well as mail of neighboring businesses two streets over at the same street number. So much for accuracy and good service. The cost: lost productivity, and more work for her when she must redeliver the errant mail.

Disconnect

Last week's airport shuttle driver who picked us up attempted to drive the entire route to the airport while engaged in a phone conversation he was in when we entered the van. True, the driver used an earpiece so we only had to hear his side of the conversation. Yet whether on surface streets or the freeway the constant was his phone call, not our safety.

Sickening Service

We showed up for a doctor's appointment last month and were greeted...by nothing. The receptionist was on the phone, and without making eye contact, stuck out her hand for our medical ID card, processed it, took my co-pay and returned the card, without saying a single word (to us). Her attention was reserved for her call. The call proceeded long after we paid and sat down to wait for the physician, along with others. No greeting, smile, acknowledgment of us as a

valued patient, or even as a person. Hers was an extended personal call that we were forced to listen in the waiting room for the next 10 minutes.

Is it too much to ask that people be present when we interact with them? You say you're multi-tasking, we say you're giving poor customer service. As a leader, remind your staff of this.

We hear employees say they can do two things at once but we say it's disrespectful and rude to divide attention from a customer or client who is waiting in front of you or has patiently listened to the music before you picked up the phone.

And what's more, the results speak for themselves: errors, omissions, sloppy products and services, as well as missed opportunities to strengthen customer loyalty and allegiance. And then there's the degrading feeling customers experience as they're held captive by inattentive service providers.

Are you Present and Accounted For?

Audit your own interactions with your customers, clients, and co-workers. Ask yourself the following:

- Do you greet them with genuine affection and attention?
- Do you know and use their name?
(Are you pronouncing it correctly? Not sure? Ask.)
- Are you giving them your undivided attention?
- Are you giving good and consistent eye contact?
- Are you sharing them with a previous client, customer or call?
- Are you easily distracted?
- If the phone rings while you're in conversation, do you interrupt serving the customer in front of you to answer it?
- Do you listen actively and intently or are you "faking" it?

In today's world -- and especially in December -- everyone wants to be heard, to be understood, and to feel others care about them. Help those you interact with feel more connected. Show them you care. Treat them as if they're the most important people in the world.

The best leaders at all levels are world-class listeners. You can be too. For the brief time they're in your midst, give them your undivided attention. Don't just be here now ... but hear now, or forever lament the loss of treasured connections and community

Heal's the Deal

We're reminded of these words of wisdom from the late Leo Buscaglia, A.K.A. Dr. Love, the American author and motivational speaker:

"Too often we underestimate
the power of a touch, a smile,
a kind word, a listening ear,
an honest compliment,
or the smallest act of caring,
all of which have the potential
to turn a life around."

Let Presence be your Present

To which we add: embody the original meaning of real time. When you listen and love with intention, your presence is your present.



***Happy Holidays
from Marilyn Manning and The Consulting Team***

RELATED TRAININGS

Start the new year with our ["Exceptional Customer Service: Putting People First in the Public Sector"](#) training. Learn how to listen to what's being said and not said, implied and embedded in meta-messages and sharpen your abilities to calm, soothe and comfort customers in person, on the telephone, and through email and chat applications.

Improve your presence through increasing your Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Sharpen your self-awareness and understand how to relate and

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Would you like to improve your ability to listen with intention, avoid common listening mistakes, ask better questions, and built trust through focusing better on your listening partner?

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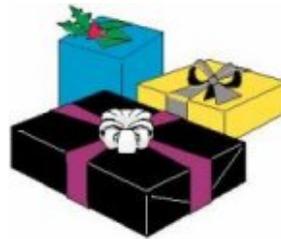
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Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about training and consulting assistance and also one-to-one coaching for leaders and employees.

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