

Offers and Relationships

Expectations for the Speaker and the Listener

As we mentioned earlier in this month's practice, as a speaker making an offer, we set into motion a conditional promise to the listener – that we will fulfill on what was promised. Whether we make or receive offers, our expectations can greatly impact our effectiveness and our ability to be in relationship with others.

As the speaker...

It's important to first pause before making an offer and examine whether we're making it freely or whether we have an underlying expectation of reciprocity. You can ask yourself this simple question to find out: "For the sake of what am I making this offer?" Getting clear on your intention up front will help you decide whether you want to make an offer and if so, will help you do so in a more authentic way. We all have likely experienced someone who has made an offer with an agenda and have learned first-hand the impact this has on our ability to trust them. Learning how to be more authentic in making offers will build your relationships and increase your chances that the listener will do something in return. And, remember...don't expect it! The gift is in the giving NOT in the receiving.

As the listener...

It's natural that we look forward to receiving the action that was promised by the speaker. Looking forward to a gift and expecting a gift are two different things. The challenge for the listener is to hold two potential realities lightly – that we will receive what was promised AND that we will not. A lot of our unnecessary suffering is generated from expecting life to be other than it is. If we can hold the promise lightly and learn to adjust and be gracious in the event the speaker doesn't fulfill on said promise, we can preserve our relationships and grow our flexibility muscle.

Being an Offer

Another important aspect of offers that impacts our identity and relationships is whether others perceive us as an offer. To be an offer is to be regarded as someone who will take care of other's concerns. It does not matter how many degrees we have, or how many skills we think we have, or how well we think we work with others – the assessment of being an offer lies with our community. We build our capacity to be an offer when we strengthen the 'what' (e.g., our skills) of our offer and the 'how' (e.g., our demeanor). When we are consistently able to provide solid skills and create healthy relationships with those around us, we become a powerful offer to our community and become the go-to person that others think of for new projects and initiatives.

For more tips and practices for relationships, visit: <http://www.umbc.edu/wellness/relationships.html>

Adapted by Jill Weinknecht Wardell, UMBC Training & Organization Development

SOURCE: "Coaching to the Human Soul: Ontological Coaching and Deep Change." Alan Sieler. Newfield, Australia.

Offers: A Self-Coaching Exercise

Expectations

- Think of an offer you'd like to make in the near future. For the sake of what are you making it?
- If you have an expectation, what is it?
- Can you let it go? If not, how might you separate it from the offer you wish to make?
- If you make the offer, how might you use your words, voice, mood, and body to communicate in a sincere, authentic way?
- Write any reflections here about how your offer was received and how you felt making it.

Becoming an Offer

- How do you assess yourself as an offer in your personal and professional life?
- Does this self-assessment match with the assessment of your community?
- What data is there to support this community assessment, either positive or negative?
- What areas do you feel you need to work on to become more of an offer (i.e., what new skills or behavior is necessary) to your community?
- What 1-2 actions will you implement now to become more of an offer?
- Write any reflections here about how you were received (e.g., verbal and non-verbal communication from others) in implementing these new actions and how you felt in the process.

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