

Quadrant II Newsletter

Research shows that the difference between leaders who derail in their career and those that soar to great heights is social skills. Social skills appear in the second quadrant of Stephen R. Covey's Importance-Urgency matrix: social skills are important to a career but not urgent (Covey is author of the top-selling business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Quadrant II provides an opportunity for business and technical professionals to learn and try out new social skills based in science.

29Dec2016, author: Valerie Patrick, PhD, *How to Recover from a Damaging Misunderstanding*

Quotable (*Key Message*)

A simple technique called contrasting can get a conversation back on track quickly when there has been a misunderstanding that has damaged the conversation.

Quantify (*The Science*)

The technique of contrasting comes from the founders of VitalSmarts (Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler) in their book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*. The tools presented in this book are supported by decades of research and by real-world application by the millions who have read the book or been trained in the tools. I count myself among those who have read the book and I've been pleasantly surprised by the simplicity and effectiveness of these tools. Contrasting is a technique to use when you want to be in productive dialogue with someone but they withdraw or get defensive because they believe you intend to do them harm or coerce them into doing something they don't want to do. This is a tool to try when you notice emotional (fear, anger, hurt, or reactions to

these emotions) or behavioral (silence like masking, avoiding, withdrawing, or violence like controlling, labeling, attacking) cues being exhibited by the other person with whom you are having a conversation.

Qualify (*Put into Practice*)

The next time you notice emotional (fear, anger, hurt, or reactions to these emotions) or behavioral (silence like masking, avoiding, withdrawing, or violence like controlling, labeling, attacking) cues that the person you are trying to have a productive dialogue with is no longer in productive dialogue with you, try contrasting. Contrasting will not work if a genuine apology is appropriate to the situation. So first do a little soul-searching: check that you didn't say something that you knew would upset the person you are talking to – if you did, then the first step is a genuine apology. An apology can only be genuine if you have had a change of heart. By reflecting on what is happening in the conversation and realizing that you did something wrong, you will have a change of heart and need to apologize. If there is no need to apologize, then try contrasting to fix the misunderstanding. Contrasting is when you first state what you don't want and then state what you do want. For example, I used this technique with my husband when we were discussing getting the house ready for my parents visit over the holidays. When he got defensive, I said “I don't want to make you more upset but I do want to come up with a plan that works for both of us to get the house ready for my parents' visit.” He got right back into the conversation immediately and we came up with a great plan together!

Quip (*Fun*)



Contrasting is not about appearance and values like in the Odd Couple starring Jack Klugman as Oscar and Tony Randall as Felix. Contrasting is about providing context to a conversation when there has been a misunderstanding.

Quest (*Resources*)

To assess your gender intelligence in the workplace, take this gender-smart assessment for free:

<http://www.classroomclipboard.com/715727/Home/Test/1E8B3014F01D44059C08CFC731B53D02> (access code is T87LSCY).

Learn ways to increase your gender intelligence at Fulcrum Connection's Science of Success for Women and Men workshop. Contact Dr. Valerie Patrick at Fulcrum Connection LLC (valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com or 412-742-9675) to learn about our workshops, speeches, and coaching in gender-smart leadership.

About Fulcrum Connection LLC

Fulcrum Connection specializes in instructional design, training, speaking, facilitation and consulting to develop skills in leadership, innovation, sustainability, troubleshooting teamwork, and managing technical professionals.