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Leadership in Slow Motion

author

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In the September issue of Guideposts magazine, Ruth Stafford Peale, wife of Norman Vincent Peale, was celebrated for her amazing life and her gifts to others. “Mrs. Positive Thinking,” co-founder of Guideposts magazine, shared several wonderful insights on making a marriage successful and one of these bits of wisdom really stood out to me. She said that a successful business executive shared with her that when talking about touchy subjects he tried to conduct the conversations in slow motion.

editor

Carla Platter

What a powerful tool for all of our relationships—personal and professional! This approach of slow motion conversations once again paralleled the Self Leadership skills that are reinforced in my martial arts.

As my partner and I practice our Kung Fu and Tai Chi techniques in slow motion, I’m able to read and understand his movements and where he’s coming from. I have time to become aware of so many things that I would miss if we were moving full speed:

- how long his reach is
- where his hands are when executing a specific move
- how he prefers to circle to his left rather than his right

All of this information helps me to achieve my goals while learning about his goals, preferences, strengths and areas of improvement.

More importantly, moving in slow motion helps me to become acutely aware of ME.

- What’s my initial reaction when he comes with a side-kick?
- “Oh, I see how quickly, or s-l-o-w-l-y (in most cases) I’m adjusting my stepping.”
- When I commit to a certain technique, I am less dynamic and fluid to what’s most effective in the moment.

In this slow motion “conversation” I’m able to stay calm and centered, be intentional in my moves and make sure I’m continuously adjusting to a powerful position. And the more I practice this in slow motion, the more I build the ability to be fluid, aware and intentional in real time.

Resources

Professor Pocket audio CDs!

Sing in Spanish. Speak in Spanish.

Nathalie Jorge, co-founder of Professor Pocket, has developed an engaging and entertaining way to teach Spanish. I have both CDs and the girls and I sing along and LOVE IT! I’m learning as well!

Isn’t it easy to see how this could be equally effective when conducting conversations around touchy topics or in difficult/intense situations?

So, how do you s-l-o-w i-t d-o-w-n?

- Let go of your one-sided agenda and be fully in the moment—listen in order to relate and understand the other person instead of to



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Celebrations!

The Matthews Chamber 2009 Strategic Planning Conference was a huge success!

Our gratitude to the Chamber for allowing Wingspan to facilitate the conference.

control the conversation. Holding tightly to our individual agenda doesn't allow us to learn about the other person and truly create a win-win.

- Sip on a bottle of water to create more space to listen and think. Sounds too simple? Start practicing in most or all conversations and see how much more you really hear the other person. You will probably be seen as more confident and clear—because you are!
- If an interaction escalates from code-yellow to code-red and/or you're triggered to anger, tell the other person out loud, "I want to hear you and be thoughtful in my responses. Right now I'm not doing that well. Let's take a break and come back to this later this afternoon or tomorrow morning."
- Speak FOR your Parts (manager part, angry part, friend part...) instead of FROM your Parts. This naturally slows you down since you are taking time to honestly identify the Part and its message/feelings.

What other tools do you use to conduct slow motion conversations?

I'd like to hear your ideas and share them with our readers.

Breathe. Listen. Breathe. Think. Breathe. Speak.

Let me know how it goes! And Happy Halloween!

Coach Cathy

Ruth Stafford Peale passed on in February of 2008 at the age of 102. Known for her endless efforts for local and national non-profit boards and causes, she was also a "quietly forceful executive that over and over made bold forward thinking decisions." Truly inspirational and positively powerful. Blessings to you, Ruth.



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Cathy Maday is the founder of Wingspan Coaching Corporation, which specializes in providing powerful tools to senior leaders who want more success and satisfaction for themselves and their teams. Visit our website at www.wingspancoaching.com for more information.

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