

Right

Time.

THE RIGHT WORDS
at
THE RIGHT TIMES:
Inspiring the Process

© 2005

for

IACP
Core Collaborative Practice Skills Institute
Dallas, Texas
June 2005

by

RICHARD H. LUCAS, PhD

Clinical Psychologist
Communications Consultant
2311 Turtle Creek Drive Missouri City TX 77459
281 437 4364 rich_lucas@sbcglobal.net

RICHARD H. LUCAS, PhD

Clinical Psychologist / Communications & Trial Consultant

2311 Turtle Creek Drive Missouri City, TX 77459

281 437 4364 rich_lucas@sbcglobal.net

CURRENT

Talks, seminars, workshops, consultation for professional groups and associations, small-medium size companies, educational institutions, and law firms.

Adjunct Professor U of Houston School of Communications, teaching *Business & Professional Communications*.

Trial consulting, witness preparation, etc.

Training faculty, A. A. White Dispute resolution Center, University of Houston Law Center.

Frequent guest lecturer, South Texas College of Law.

PAST

Private Practice of Psychology (20 years)

Adjunct Professor, University of Houston Law Center; taught *Psychology of Communications* (7 years). "Communications Expert" for Advanced Trial Advocacy and American Bar Association sponsored workshops (7 years)

Communications Expert, workshops, for Attorney-Mediators Institute (3 years)

Baker Communications, workshops on Negotiations, Effective Presentations, Selling Techniques, Supervisory Skills, Media Training, etc. (1 year)

Numerous talks, seminars, workshops for corporations, legal associations, service groups, churches, schools, etc. (28 years)

Publications:

--*Loving Me-Loving You: How to Love Yourself and Someone Else at the Same Time*, Kendall/Hunt, 1991.

-- *The Winning Edge: Effective Communication and Persuasion Techniques for Lawyers* (with K. Byron McCoy, JD), Lawyers & Judges

Publishing, 1999.

-- Weekly Columnist: Ft. Bend Star (1979-89), Ft. Bend Mirror (89-99); The Herald-Coaster (1999 - current).

-- About 25 journal articles or chapters in books on various psychological topics.

n Book in progress: *Effective Body Language for Lawyers: The Right Move at the*

Please note: This "paper" is neither a progression of thought nor does it present a single thesis with supporting arguments.

Because Collaborative Law requires a great deal of FLEXIBILITY, this paper simply presents a *variety of communication ideas, methods, and techniques from which the Collaborative Professional can choose.*

Many of the materials contained herein are from:

- 1) *The Winning Edge: Effective Persuasion and Communication Techniques for Lawyers* by Richard H. Lucas, PhD & K. Byron, JD (Lawyers and Judges Publishing, 1999).
- 2) *Effective Communication Skills for Mediators: Getting to a Better "Yes"* by Richard H. Lucas, PhD (Unpublished manuscript, 2003)
- 3) *Tactics Especially Relevant for Negotiations* by Richard H.. Lucas, PhD (Unpublished manuscript, 2003)
- 4) *Effective Body Language for Lawyers: The Right Move at the Right Time* by Richard H. Lucas, PhD (book in progress, Lawyers & Judges Publishing, est. Fall, 2005)
- 5) Various papers for CLE presentations by the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Helping Relations: You and Clients have a Choice.....	4
Surface and Deep Structure of Language	4
The Best Way to Start Questions	5
First Truth v. Second Truth	5
The Three Enemies: Victim, Resentment, Right	6
Make No Assumption	6
Use the Others Person's Words	7
Responding in Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic	8
And v. But	8
The Open-to-Closed Question Mistake	9
Criteria Words: Values Revealed	10
"Is this about?"	11
The Conditional Close	12
Ultimate Goals/Values: "What will that do for you?"	13
Dealing with Difficult People	14

Dissolving Anger at You	15
Changing is Hard to Do: A Parable	15
Professional Growth: Learners v. Non-Learners	16

Helping Relations: You and Clients Have Choices

Collaborative Professionals are helpers. We use communications to facilitate relationships and problem solving between or among people. There are three basic ways people help other people. Think about someone coming to you and asking for help -- a family member, a client, a friend, or an associate.

Trait Approach. This is finding and then suggesting some personality characteristic about the person that you think causes the problem. Examples: “You are not flexible. You are holding on to your anger. You want too much. You aren’t trying hard enough.” This approach makes rapport impossible; it leads to defensiveness. We need to avoid this approach because it can create defensive judgment and often is perceived as taking the other party’s side. It is also a great way to create an impasse in the collaborate process.

Advice Giving. This is telling someone what to do. Examples: “You should.... You need to.... If only you would.... You have to....” Like the Trait approach, this also is dangerous because of the real possibility of neglecting or negating the parties’ interests.

Goals Approach. This is helping people understand their goals, realize risks, and find ways to achieve their interests or values within the context of a real-life situation. this is accomplished mainly by asking questions. What, how, and when questions are asked is the key to effective solution-creation.

Surface Structure and Deep Structure of Language

Overt communication -- words, tonality, gestures -- is the *Surface Structure* of language. It is what is objectively heard and seen; we could all agree that person X said these words with this emphasis and this gesture.

The Surface Structure is intimately tied to the *Deep Structure* of language -- all thoughts, feelings, meanings, connotations, associations, past experiences, etc. that give those words, that tonality, that gesture meaning and understanding, and determine our response. Understand this, and you will understand the interface of psychology and language.

I say, "Cats make great pets." Person X and Person Y hear the same Surface Structure -- i.e., the same words. And chances are good that when they go into their Deep Structure to understand and respond to that sentence, both will understand what I mean by "cat" -- i.e., a small, furry, feline house pet, not a mountain lion or saber tooth tiger.

B - 4

Both X and Y share that meaning of "cat." So far, so good. However, X's past experiences, thoughts, feelings, and associations (Deep Structure) react with: "I love cats, too. Let's share cat stories." But Y, with a different Deep Structure, reacts with: "Cats are loathsome, horrible creatures. Let's change the subject."

Good communicators are sensitive to others' Deep Structure and know how to tap into it to get the response they want. Good Mediators know the questions to ask to tap into peoples' Deep Structure to facilitate a resolution.

The Best Way to Start Questions

**** WHAT? Else?**

**** HOW? Else?**

**** WHO? Else?**

**** WHEN? Else?**

**** WHERE? Else?**

**** WHY? Else?**

TELL ME

PLEASE DESCRIBE

HELP ME UNDERSTAND ...

EXPLAIN

First Truth vs. Second Truth

The First Truth is what someone wants to tell you or can tell you; the Second Truth is what you need to know or what needs to come out to reveal the interests of the parties that will resolve the conflict. The First Truth is the parties' or lawyers' position -- the first Yes that probably entrenched them in the dispute to start with.

Collaborators can elicit the Second Truth with careful questioning. By *living in the question* rather than finding fault or giving advice, we can better elicit the issues, interests, values, and risks that help parties settle. Resolutions come from Second Truths.

B - 5

The Three Major Enemies

Almost every problem, difficulty, heartache, depression, negative feeling, etc. can be traced to one of three states or stances toward others and the world. These three can also be seen as goals in a relationship.

*They are, of course, totally useless goals because they **MAKE YOU MISERABLE AND PUSH OTHERS AWAY**. When these are explained to people, and they begin to see which one they favor in relationships, you help them diagnose their issue.*

Then, you can help people realize that this goal or state is:

- a) within their control*
- b) must be changed in order to feel better and find solutions..*

The three are: Being a VICTIM, holding RESENTMENT, and NEEDING TO BE RIGHT.

In any dispute, especially marital disputes, one, two, or all three will be presenting. Pointing out the pitfalls of each for parties and in collaborative discussions can greatly reduce and certainly help prevent difficulties antithetical to the process.

Make No Assumptions

Although not a technique per se, this is a rule essential to assisting others in

resolving their differences. Remember that every time you communicate, peoples' minds go somewhere. Making assumptions suggests others should adopt *your* version of what they say rather than exploring what is of value or interest to them. So, where will their minds go?

Assumptions say: "I am clever. I know more than you do." The focus switches from the party's concern to your ingenuity. When your assumption misses the mark, mediation is sidetracked at best; at worst, anger, resentment, or withdrawal of cooperation can occur.

In a family law custody dispute, the wife/mother says, "I am afraid of my husband." You assume this means she is physically afraid and proceeds to ask questions about physical violence. The woman looks puzzled and becomes defensive because she has no fear of physical violence.

Rather than assume that her "afraid" means physical fear you simply can ask, "What are you afraid of?" or "Tell me more about that fear." Such questions tap into her Deep Structure. They allow her to say what her fears are while knowing her concern has been heard.

B - 6

It may be that she is afraid her husband might move out of state, contest custody even after the mediation, hide assets, or tell everyone in their congregation that she had an affair with the choir director. These are examples of the Second Truth.

Remember this: *different words are different worlds*. Any time you hear something that is not perfectly clear (usually a judgment, opinion, assertion, or feeling), ask "What do you mean by...?" "Tell me about ..." or very simply, "How's that?"

Use the Other Persons' Words

This is also called "active listening" or "backtracking" or "looping." You can facilitate conflict resolution better when the decision-makers are convinced you have heard what they say *in their own words*. To accomplish this, repeat back some portion of what the person just said when asking your next question. This is the surest way to tap into another's Deep Structure.

There is a saying for effective Direct Examinations that is just as true in the collaborative process: *The seed of the next question is in the last answer*. Using another person's words also is the best way to avoid your own false judgments or assumptions.

To help you backtrack, repeat, or loop what you just heard, first *repeat back in your mind what the person is saying as she or he is saying it*. This takes practice. One way of making this a habit is to repeat back in your mind when you are watching TV, listening to radio or a talk, or any time you are in a low risk situation.

When you repeat back in your mind, you stand a far better chance of remembering *what* was said and the *way* it was said than just relying on your memory. This is far better than trying to summarize or paraphrase in your own words. Your words, however keenly crafted, are not the other person's words or Deep Structure!

For example, a person says, "I'm upset about what happened to me." Do not ask, "Why are you angry?" Your "angry" may not be the same as that person's "upset." Instead ask, "What are you upset about?" Or, "Help me understand what happened that you are upset." The person will feel he or she has been heard. You are achieving or deepening rapport and trust while facilitating the mediation process.

As you backtrack, if you don't hit the mark, the party, lawyer, or whomever will simply correct you. If you hit the mark, they will be encouraged to further the problem-solving process. Never underestimate our natural inclination to put matters into our own words. Remember, it is their case, not yours. Backtracking is essential for creating and sustaining rapport and for efficient conflict resolution.

B - 7

Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Representational Systems

For reasons beyond the scope of this paper, it is now well established that people are inclined to think using one or more of three modalities: Visual, Auditory, or Kinesthetic. In any given situation, we typically think about or represent our thoughts in one modality over the other two. *Visual* people make pictures in their minds; they like to see something. *Auditory* people emphasize talk; what they hear is important. *Kinesthetic* people have a felt sense; they like feeling and movement words.

In the collaborative process, Visual people may talk in terms of what they need to see or look at; Auditory people talk in terms of what they need to hear; Kinesthetic people talk in terms of what they need to feel. So, give them what they need!

These three are called Representational Systems because they are the ways people tend to process information, represent the world, and talk about it. These Representational Systems are part of our Deep Structure. They are vital to how we a)

process, b) interpret, and c) respond to information. People *see* more clearly, *tune* in to, or get a better *feel* for communication that is in their same system.

Listen to which system the person favors and ask questions or make suggestions *in that same system*. Again, it is crucial *not to put in your own words until you have demonstrated you heard their words*. You can tell which system a person prefers simply by listening to the words they use as you *backtrack in your mind*. Then, match their system.

Examples:

a) "I need to *see* something better." Questions: "What do you need to see? What would look better to you?"

b) "I haven't *heard* them *say* what's important to me." Questions: "What do you need to have them say that's important to you? What would you like to hear?"

c) "This doesn't *feel* right." Questions: "What would make it feel right? What do you feel you could move to now?"

Continually listen for Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic language. Ask questions in those systems to achieve rapport, to help the person respond in the Second Truth, and to move the process along.

And vs. But

As people who help others resolve conflicts, it is essential we remain focused in our questioning. One way we give the impression we disagree or even favor the other side is by inserting certain words or phrases in our speech. Probably the most common is using the word "but."

B - 8

Grammatically, the difference between "and" and "but" may appear trivial. However, to paraphrase Mark Twain, it can be the difference between getting hit by a lightning bolt and getting hit by a lightning bug.

Someone says something and you backtrack (loop) part of what was said in your next question or comment. If you find yourself not agreeing in *any* way, make sure you use "and" rather than "but." The word "and" includes; "but" negates -- it has been called a verbal eraser. Anytime we don't like something we hear, the natural tendency is to use "but" to correct the other person. Good for cross examination; bad for collaboration.

Someone says, "I understand, but...." The message is: "I don't care to understand; you have left something out that is important; you are wrong; I will now

correct you.” The other person’s internal response will be less than favorable. He or she may focus on that rather than on moving the process along. “I understand, and let’s think about....” works better.

The rule is: use *and* rather than *but*. A person says, “I was out of work for three months. Don’t say, “OK, but weren’t you still on the payroll?” Or worse: “But isn’t it true you were still on the payroll?” Instead try, “Alright, and how did you manage those months?” This takes you out of an adversarial stance, gets to the Second Truth, and may prompt the person to think about a possible weakness in his or her demands.

If you are skeptical of the importance of this apparently simple psycholinguistic distinction, try this experiment. Go to someone you have a close relationship with. Say, “I like you, but...” and then just stop. Notice the reaction.

The Open-to-Closed Question Mistake

We can think that if someone doesn’t respond immediately to our open-ended question, we must have asked a bad question. The tendency is to rush in and fill the void of silence by quickly asking the same question in different words or a different question altogether.

Silence is good. If you ask a question and the person is silent, chances are very good that he or she is thinking about what you asked. Deep Structure at work! This means no stock, prepared answer; no glib or vacuous response. It means *you have just asked a very important question* that may be touching an issue of doubt or risk.

When we rush in to ask another question, it is almost always going to be a closed-end, deposition type, cross examination question. For example, you say, “If this goes to trial, how might the other side discredit your expert?” There is silence, so you quickly ask, “Does your expert have much courtroom experience?” There are at least three problems with this.

B - 9

First, you are doing their work for them. Second, the person can get off the hook with a simple yes or no. Third, the discussion now will focus on the expert’s experience testifying. An excellent opportunity may be lost to move a step closer to resolution.

Criteria Words

Review what you read above about Surface and Deep Structure. Surface Structure is what people say and how they say it. Deep Structure is what gives their

words meaning. This helps explain why the same word can elicit different, even opposite, reactions from two people hearing the same thing: their Deep Structures are different. In a way, this vital distinction of psycholinguistics parallels the First and Second Truths.

One of the most important contents of Deep Structure is each person's set of Criteria Words. These are single words or phrases that are of particular importance to people. They hold what is valuable to them and what their interests or beliefs are. They are called Criteria Words because they are *the criteria which people use to make decisions*.

You can a) notice Criteria Words, and b) use them to help the parties resolve their dispute. The people you are dealing with are going to use their criteria (values) to accept, reject, or modify the other party's comments or proposals. So you should know what they are. Fortunately, there is an easy way to find out.

One way to find out what someone's values or interests are is simply to ask. It is not bad to do this, and it may even work. Unfortunately, early in the process, people are still emphasizing their first "Yes" -- their positional stance or opposition to the other side. So answers to "What is important or of value?" may be fraught with responses that are the First Truth -- what they have been conditioned to say or think that will win them their position.

However, if you stop, look, and listen to *what* people say and *how* they say it, you can quite straightforwardly discover their values and interests. Remember that the Surface Structure (words, tonality, body/gestures) and Deep Structure are intimately tied to each other. When we "pull up" something of value to us from our Deep Structure, we almost always alter a) what we say, b) how we say it, and c) how we gesture.

Likewise, people reveal their Criteria words in one, two, or all three of the following ways: a) words they *repeat* often, b) words they emphasize with a *change in tonality*, and c) words that they use with *gestures*.

Example A: Party says these sentences, interspersed during the first session: "I just feel I want what is fair. I've taken great pains to get what is fair for me. The other side

B - 10

doesn't care; they are not being fair. I came to this process to get a fair settlement." (If you are backtracking in your mind, you will be surprised how easy it is to notice the repetition of the word "fair" even if the person talks a long time.)

Example B: Party says, “We need to see something that *looks better*.” (Those two words are emphasized and said more slowly.)

Example C: Party says, “They couldn’t have said that was their best offer. I need to hear a better [makes gesture] *good faith* proposal.”

(Note that A uses Kinesthetic, B uses Visual, and C uses Auditory.)

Someone’s Criteria Words may surface early in the process and may occur at any time. Notice when people repeat, use special tonal emphasis, and make gestures. Then, you can use those words at crucial points in the process to create movement toward resolution. Using the three examples above:

- A) “What about their last offer do you feel is *fair*?”
- B) “As you look at their last offer, what do you see that *looks better* to you?”
- C) “What part about what they said sounds like a *good faith* effort?”

Often the party’s and the lawyer’s Criteria Words are different. You can notice these differences and use the party’s Criteria Words when asking questions of him or her. (It is still backtracking, even if they said it five hours or one month ago.) Then also use the lawyer’s Criteria Words when talking to him or her.

For example, say that one Criteria Word for a party is “settle today” and the lawyer’s is “structured settlement.” Look at the party and ask, “What can I give them now so you can *settle today* [then look at the lawyer and add] with an appropriate *structured settlement*?”

It is a psycholinguistic fact that people respond more favorably and will make changes more easily when they hear their own Criteria Words. Finally, it is best to use Criteria Words in the context of a question. They will be more inclined to craft movement because people will support what *they* help create.

“Is This About...? and “What is this about?”

This technique can be very valuable, and must be used with caution because there is risk of making an untoward opinion or judgment. This technique departs from the maxim of starting every question with Who, What, Where, etc. However, it is so useful that it is worth bending the rule to get the benefits.

Use this technique when the decision makers seem bogged down, or if you sense there is something important behind what is being said. This is Second Truth seeking.

The formula is this: Ask, "Is this about...?" and insert a guess or suggestion as to the issue. Keep three things in mind. First, do this with a questioning, reflective, almost uncertain or wondering tonality. It is as if you are just thinking out loud. Second, try to be vague or even conceptual to help avoid any hint of being judgmental or accusatory. Third, you may insert something the person has already said.

A party indicates a concern over a certain issue. You ask "What is your concern?" but get nowhere. So try, "Is this about something specific or general?" Again, of course it is! But the question works. As you practice this technique you will be amazed how it increases honesty and helps open up the process. An added advantage is that it deepens trust and rapport.

If you miss your guess, people will simply say No, and most of the time will go on to explore the issue. If they don't openly explore, you can then ask, "OK, then what is this about?" Use gentle tonality and display honest interest.

Here are just a few generic examples of using this question: "*Is this about ...a concern you haven't mentioned yet? ...something you think may happen after the settlement? ...not getting certain concern met? ...the effect on your family's future? ..and issue about your children you have for the future?*"

The Conditional Close

The Conditional Close is a method for moving people *from No to Maybe*. It helps people get "unstuck" from their position and think of alternatives.

The Conditional Close is most effective when a person is entrenched in a position and usual methods have not helped that person move off that position. (Typically, this technique would occur in the middle to later stages of the process.) The first thing you do is to find the person's objection to another alternative. Then, propose a conditional acceptance based on resolving that objection.

To uncover a person's objection, simply ask. "What's your objection? What about that bothers you...?" "What can't you agree with just now -- Why?" Make sure you ask "Why else...?" and "What else...?" to get to the Second Truth. After the person names an objection, backtrack that objection using the following formula.

"If [meet the objection], would you consider [insert the movement you are suggesting]." It is extremely important you say "would you consider," not, "would you agree to" or some final commitment. This is not closing the deal, it is a Conditional Close.

It is getting the person's mind to get off the hard and fast original or current position and toward one possible solution. It also acknowledges the person's legitimate interest or value, hence you both maintain and deepen rapport.

A woman says she won't accept the other side's current proposal because it is "not complete enough." You ask, "What is not complete about it?" or, "What would make it complete enough?" She says, "There's nothing in there about how we will handle visitations for my family reunion each year."

Now that you have an objection, at least in general terms, you can move to the Conditional Close: "If he included a provision for that, then would you consider accepting his proposal?" At this point the person will say Yes and/or will elaborate on what would make the offer acceptable.

This shift comes from the magic word "If." In this example, the details still may need to be hammered out, but you have gotten the person off "No" to a *Better* "Yes." You may have to repeat the Conditional Close several times with the same issue. It will quickly become one of your favorite ways to unravel sticky issues and inspire movement.

"What Will X Do For You?"

This probing question helps get at the heart of someone's values and interests. Ask it when someone a) demands or requests something, b) expresses a concern, fear, or new issue, or c) says she or he needs something in a final settlement. The "X" in the formula question is simply a backtrack of their issue. Sometimes you may want to repeat this question several times either on the spot or in a later sessions.

A party says, "I think I should get \$200,000 of the retirement." You ask, "What would getting \$200,000 do for you?" Answer comes back, "It would compensate me." (Do you notice the First Truth? You will almost always get this when you first ask the question.) So you follow up, backtracking and using the form of the question, "What would being compensated do for you?" Here people will almost have to go into Deep Structure for the values, interest, or what they "really" want. (Be careful not to interrupt their silence, because they will have to think about it.)

A party says, "I do not want this to go to court." Ask, "What would not going to court do for you?" "It would save me a huge hassle." "OK, and what would saving a huge hassle do for you?" You can readily see how now exploring the prevention of hassle will open up their issues and concerns. It might be keeping avoiding legal fees, damaging children, or whatever.

You can also quickly realize that when getting answers to the vital question, “What will X do for you?”, each person eventually reveals his or her Criteria Words. You get two advantages with just one simple question. You can then use these Criteria Words in deepening rapport, forming future questions, and presenting proposals.

As with all techniques, you can practice this question in situations other than the collaborative process until it becomes more natural. In fact, think of something *you* want, and then ask yourself this question several times, always making the “X” what you just said. It is an amazingly quick way to get to what is truly important to you.

Dealing with Difficult People: Change the Question you Ask yourself.

You have been dealing with a “difficult person” for some time now. You know you can’t change the other person -- you’ve tried. The only thing left is to change yourself (without compromising your representation).

Our brains work by asking questions. You are seldom away of the constant questions your brain asks itself. Also, your brain answers every question you ask, whether or not you are aware of it. Every time you have any dealings with or think about this person, you will be asking and answering questions. This happens very fast.

The answers you give those questions determine your thoughts, feelings, reactions, and actions. So, one way of dealing with a difficult person is to:

Change the questions you are asking yourself.

Example: You get a phone message from this person that says she needs to talk to you ASAP. What questions do you ask? “Is this another phony crisis? What did she goof up this time? Doesn’t she realize I’ve got other things to do?” and so on. Such “leading questions” pre-determine the answers.

Hence, you may be perpetuating the *difficult person cycle* where you are part of the problem, not the solution.

Instead, what questions could you ask yourself in this situation? How about: “How soon will I take 5 minutes to deal with this quickly? What can I say to diminish

any concerns she might have? How can I listen carefully so I do not make unwarranted assumptions?" and so on.

Notice what goes on in your thoughts the second you think of a difficult person in any way. Consciously ask yourself questions that are constructive and give you some peace -- at least more than you had before.

B - 14

Dissolving Another Person's Anger at You

Hard as we try, people are going to get angry at us. Below is a formula that works and actually will further the collaborative process when done correctly.

1] BACKTRACK

Repeat back what the person says, using exact same words -- with the sole goal of understanding. Do this until you have convinced the other person (and yourself!) that you truly understand HOW IT IS FOR HIM/HER. You know when to stop when the person gives you a "That's Right!" response.

2] STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

"If that had happened to me, I would feel the same way." Wait, person may want to say more. If so, repeat 1] until can do 2] again. You know you have done this step correctly when the person "relaxes" and emotion is mostly gone. Never say, "I know how you feel" or "I understand how you feel."

3] APOLOGY

"I'm sorry." Say it only ONCE and with NO REASONS, EXCUSES, or even EXPLANATIONS. Never say, "but...."

4] NEGOTIATION

"What do you think we should do about it?" If person insists that he/she can/will do nothing, ask what you can do about it. However, try to make it a "we" project.

5] THANKS

After agreed solution or remedy, say, "Thank you for telling me."

6] OTHER AGENDA

Ask, "Is there anything else (that you are upset, concerned about)?" When first

five steps work, this opens person to discuss other issues that may have been unexpressed.

Changing is Hard to Do: A Parable

I noticed years ago that people often try to remedy their problems using the exact same thing that got them in trouble in the first place. I call this "trying to cure your neurosis with your neurosis."

Three young men entered a monastery the same day. Each one had a certain

B - 15

problem that he wished to resolve. They stood together, side by side and explained what they wanted from the Master.

The First one said that he had a problem with trying to please others too much. The Second explained that he had come to believe he was too critical of others. The Third admitted that he always considered himself better than others.

Each expressed a strong desire to change his respective problem.

The Master listened patiently and after a short pause said, "The cure for each of you is the exact same. From this moment on, until you get specific instructions from me otherwise, you each are to remain silent. You are not to say one word until such time I tell you that you may speak again."

The First student (who tried to please too much) immediately said: "Oh, Master, know that I shall do exactly what you say. I certainly will not utter even one word in any way until you, my excellent teacher, inform me that I may speak. This is obviously wise advice, and I shall follow this command now and all your commands in the future."

The Second (who criticized others) then said: "You idiot! You imbecile! He just told us not to speak and immediately you spoke! You have now ruined everything for all of us. How selfish and dumb you are!"

And the Third (who thought himself better than others) simply said: "And may everyone note and remember that I am the only one who has not broken the silence."

I don't divide the world into the weak and the strong, or

**the successes and the failures.
I divide the world into learners and nonlearners.**

**There are people who learn, who are open to what happens around them,
who listen, who hear the lessons.**

**When they do something stupid, they don't do it again.
And when they do something that orks a little bit,
they do it even better and harder the next time.**

**The question to ask is not whether you are a success or a failure, but
whether you are a learner or a nonlearner.**

- Benjamin Barber

B - 16 [end]