

Sherpa Strength: The Newsletter of Executive Coaching

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Getting to the Point

By Brenda Corbett, 'Sherpa Guide' author

Let me be direct. If any of these five situations apply to you, then you MUST read this article:

1. I have a situation at work that I am not dealing with properly.
2. There are situations at work keeping me up at night.
3. I have to ask an employee a tough question . . . and I am avoiding it.
4. I can have a hard time stopping an employee from being disruptive.
5. I can't always get my message across clearly.

If you are going to get past, or get through these situations successfully, you must understand the importance of being direct. Being direct means saying what you have to say when you need to say it.

You are saying to yourself: "I can do that. I always speak up. I always say what I need to say."

So, you speak up. Three big questions follow:

Do people hear you? Do people understand you? Did you get your message across?

Stepping out. Really saying what you need to say. Sometimes it feels confrontational. Sometimes it feels downright uncomfortable. How do you make it okay to really deal with things? Bottom line, most of your lack of directness relates to your comfort zone. That is where you hang and where you speak from. It is what you know and understand. It is your favorite place to be.



You are peaceful and calm in your comfort zone. Everything is familiar. You know and handle relationships the same way in your Comfort Zone. You have conversations and say the same things, or fail to say them, in your Comfort Zone. It is easy, 'cause you know it and know it well. This is where you want to stay because you know and understand what will happen when you are here. The Comfort Zone. A place where you are truly too comfortable for words.

Now working out of your Comfort Zone, the first step you make will be to your Learning Zone. This is outside your comfort zone. You know that, because it is new and uncharted territory. This is not too scary for you. It is usually defined as a place to gain knowledge. Most people choose to learn something new, so the Learning Zone is a low-stress place.





The Panic Zone. This is not a good place to hang. Do not stay here for any period of time. Panic means you are experiencing anxiety in one way or the other, perhaps both physical and mental discomfort.

Don't want you here...need for you to make one step back and end up here:

The Sherpa Zone. This is past the Learning Zone, yet not touching the Panic Zone. Getting to the Sherpa Zone is a simple yet difficult goal.

Being out of your comfort zone means you will work harder at the things you are having trouble with. It means that if being direct is hard for you, you will realize that and work on it.

You will push yourself to:

- Ask more questions.
- Confront when you have to.
- Express your views at appropriate times .

You become direct by just doing it; realizing you are going to get through it and understanding that doing it is NOT near as hard as you thought.

Do it, do it again and do it again...being direct has to become habit. You have to stretch your comfort zone to start to being direct.

Here is a short assessment on the next page to evaluate your directness.

Print this page out and write down your answers. When you see the results, you'll know what to do.

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