

CP Examples from Rita Marie

Heart-Brain Insight Story:

A few years ago, I had a health challenge that I couldn't get rid of.

The left side of my nose was constantly plugged up.

I'd never had sinus issues before and I couldn't understand what was going on.

I looked for a solution on the internet and tried many of them.

I went to three ear, nose and throat doctors without any relief.

I was constantly having to do sinus cleanses, and it was miserable.

Finally, I realized I hadn't asked for an insight on this problem.

So I moved into coherence – heart focus, heart breathing, heart feeling of appreciation and I asked “what do I need to know.”

The answer came, “Stand on your head.”

What? I hadn't stood on my head in about 45 years.

But I trust my insights so I put a pillow on the floor, kicked my legs up against a wall and did it for as long as I could tolerate.

I stood up and it was better, so I did it again.

After the third try, I was breathing normally for the first time in over 6 months.

This showed me that it was likely a circulation problem, not a sinus problem, and now I knew what to do for it.

What Empathy is Not Story:

Now let's look at the second habitual response on the list - agreeing.

I imagine most of us use this response fairly regularly.

It's especially harmful when we agree with something negative that someone has said about another person.

For example, a few years ago, we had a course here at Quizur, our global headquarters.

We had 60 Costa Rican public school teachers in the course and almost all of them were women.

When one of our beautiful orchids turned up missing, we shared this loss with the teachers.

One stood up and said, "Whoever took that orchid has brought shame on us.

We are professional teachers, not thieves.

That person should bring the orchid back, so our names are cleared."

One after another **agreed** with the first teacher as they all ganged up on the thief.

Their habitual response of agreeing had condemned this person.

Then we told them, "Let's try this over again using the language of feelings and needs we've learned today."

What do you think she might have been feeling when she took that orchid?"

The teachers looked at their list of feelings and guessed, "inspired, delighted, hopeful, motivated".

They guessed needs that had been met by having the orchid, "beauty, choice, nurturance, self-expression".

Then they guessed her feelings after hearing what had been said about the thief, "embarrassed, ashamed, regretful, vulnerable, hurt, sad and lonely."

They guessed her unmet needs, "integrity, emotional safety, to have her intentions understood, harmony and belonging.

After this, a teacher stood up and said, "I'm so sorry I said terrible things about whoever took the orchid.

She might have needed some beauty in her life.

There is so much beauty here at Quizur that one missing orchid won't make much difference.

I hope this experience hasn't been traumatic for whoever took the orchid.

One teacher after another expressed the same sentiments.

Then, in the back, a teacher stood up and said, "I'm the one who took the orchid."

She started crying and said, "I'm sorry I took it, but I'm so touched by your empathy.

It's true – my house has nothing beautiful in it.

I'm a single mother trying to support 2 children and we're barely making it.

I just wanted to bring beauty into our lives.

I'll never forget your kind guesses of my intention.

Now I want to give the orchid back.

We told her we wanted to gift the orchid to her and all the teachers clapped.

Afterwards, the teacher who'd taken the orchid became one of our best trainers in the school program.

Whenever I tell this story, it brings tears to my eyes.

I'm so grateful the teachers transformed their habitual agreement about a negative judgment of someone to empathy.

The Gift of an Empathetic Guess:

Recently I had to go see my pro bono lawyers here in Costa Rica.

They've been very good to our nonprofit for over 15 years.

However, they're located in a very tall building with incredibly tight security.

You have to write your passport number, your name, who you are going to see and the time you entered.

Then they search you and your things with a metal detector and finally you go through a metal gate.

Now I'm a Missouri farm girl who grew up with no locks on the doors.

This level of security communicates there must be **something** to be afraid of in this building.

Finally, I get through the security and step onto the elevator.

To my surprise, there is a young woman in uniform there who is the elevator operator.

I tell her my floor and she pushes the button.

I'm shaking off my anxiety from the intense security and nervously messing with my hair.

The young woman looks me in the eye and she says, "Are you feeling afraid?"

I said, "No, I'm not afraid, but the security did make me feel nervous and irritable."

She nodded her head and I said, "Thank you."

For you see, now I was calm and ready to visit my lawyers.

In the space of a 2-minute elevator ride, she had given me the gift of an empathetic guess.

Turning Habitual Responses Into Empathy:

Now let's turn a couple of these statements into empathy.

For example, "Advising – Getting mad won't do you any good."

You could say, "Are you feeling angry and need some support?"

Another example is "Cheering up – It'll be better in the morning."

Instead, you could say, "It sounds like you're feeling discouraged and need some reassurance, is that right?"