

Temperature Reading

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The temperature reading is a communication tool that has been used with groups of people who have regular contact, to enhance contact and encourage communication. These may be training groups, work teams, committees, etc.

Appreciations

Much of the time we hear about what is wrong with us - the world tells us and we tell ourselves all the time; we are usually our own worst critics. This is an opportunity to tell another person something you appreciate them for.

Hearing appreciations regularly is an important element in our self-esteem. Self-esteem should not come only from outside ourselves but we do need to feel appreciated, valued and accepted by others. It is also important to know what we are appreciated for and to learn to accept appreciation. Many of us have a conditioned response of pushing compliments away - "It was nothing", or "Oh this old thing."

New Information

So much of what goes wrong in relationships is because we are not given the information we need to understand what is going on and there is too much room left for assumptions. When we know what is happening for our partner or colleague it keeps us updated and encourages more satisfying relationships. Eg. "I finally got that new contact," "There's a good article in the Guardian I think you would enjoy."

Puzzles

This is an opportunity to ask for clarification eg. "Why did you seem so edgy this morning?"

Complaints With Recommendations

This should not be blaming or judgemental. You can request a fair fight for change if you really think you need the structure, or you can simply say, "This thing happened that bothered me and I would feel better if you do this other thing instead." When you state your complaint, be specific about which behaviour displeases you and state which behaviour you are asking for instead.

Information, puzzles and complaints are all part of problem solving.

Wishes, Expectations and Action Points

If your expectations are dissimilar from mine it merely illustrates the fact that we are all different and in being different we have different expectations. The more we can bring these expectations into our awareness and talk about them, the more possibility there is we will reach some accord. If we have rules that say we should not let ourselves know what we are thinking or feeling or wanting, much less to let another person know, then it is almost impossible to work in a comfortable close relationship. Our hopes are integral, vital parts of who and what we are, if we do not share them as information, we deprive others of an important part of ourselves.

Action points give a clear statement of what is expected by whom and when.

The temperature reading is a nourishing way of keeping each other informed. At first it may feel awkward and clumsy to use and at other times our own low self esteem may leave us feeling less than eager to make time for this communication. Positive relationships do not happen by accident, time needs to be invested in keeping them open and effective and the temperature reading can act as insurance policy for this in relationships when we are willing to make and take the time.