REDIRECTING ENERGY (a.k.a. INFLUENCE)

At this stage of the ILP we hear that many of you are having good experiences of not only redirecting your own energy through Recalibration, positive No, FISBe etc. but also taking opportunities to shift other people’s attention, mindset, and inner states so as to channel conversations and actions in more productive directions. Excellent! Often people think of redirection as an aspect of influence.

We have not spent a great deal of time on redirecting energy, but Q3 gives many tools and insights into how to practice this effectively and positively influence people. Below are some tips for how to do this in conversation, with special emphasis on the place where most of us fail – becoming DEFENSIVE in the face of others complaining about, critiquing, or literally attacking our ideas or behaviors.

**Redirecting Energy (Influence) = Center > Connect > Redirect**

**To succeed you need to learn how to respond non-defensively, including how to Disarm the emotional charge when someone is complaining or attacking you.**

Most of us find this really difficult, and are not as good at it as we imagine. In the workshop we discussed how the three default reactions to complaint and attack are to **Attack back, Accommodate, or Avoid**. Instead, we are advocating that you practice Recalibrating and Redirecting Energy to help you can stay calm and present, with all of your faculties available, and skillfully channel all that emotional energy in a better way.

**REDIRECTING ENERGY: CENTER > CONNECT > REDIRECT**

1. First quickly ***Recalibrate*** to get to being Centered: Stop > Ground > Center.
2. Then, Redirect Energy: Start at Center and move into Connect and Redirect.

*But how do you Connect when the other person is triggered, perhaps irrational, and throwing a bunch of Drama energy at you?*

There is no magic formula that makes such situations clean and easy but there are ways to help ourselves do better. Remember, you may need to Recalibrate yourself over and over during the course of a difficult conversation. When your heart rate goes over your 110 or so you are probably ‘emotionally flooded’ and will have a tendency to slip into your lower brain centers and slide into Drama. But if you can stay present and centered – then what?

Once you are CENTERED and present, the following guidelines can help you can CONNECT with the other person, unlock the energy underlying their anger and anxiety, and REDIRECT it in a useful way.

**CONNECT by:**

1. **Disarming** (agree with some truth in what they are complaining about or criticizing – get your ego out of the way)
2. **Empathizing** and **Inquiring** (demonstrate you hear how they feel, you care, and you want to know more Active Listening)
3. **Model speaking to what you want** (focus on desired outcomes and seek common interests - FISBe)

**Simplified example**

Complainer:

* *“I don’t have enough resources to get all these projects done on time!*

Redirector:

* *“You may be right! (disarming)*
* *“That must be really frustrating… (empathy) Tell me more… (inquiry)*
* *“I want you to have what you need… (modeling expressing Creatively)*

**How to practice psychological DISARMING**

**Disarm** the person who is complaining or criticizing you by **genuinely seeking to find some truth in their criticism or complaint**. This can be hard to do if you don’t have sufficient courage and confidence to put your ego aside. It takes real strength to be a Learner, to STOP and check your own attitude and intentions at a moment when your hard-wired reaction is to protect your ego by Attacking back, Avoiding, or becoming overly Accommodating. The other person is emotionally triggered and this is contagious. Disarming looks most like Accommodating, but is very different.

The most common fears people have about DISARMING rather than reacting (attacking back, accommodating, or avoiding) are:

* We are somehow admitting to being wrong (admitting they are right)
* We are losing, and losing power (and the other is winning and gaining power over us)
* We are somehow agreeing to a story about reality that is inaccurate and unhelpful

But in fact, all these fears are not only unfounded – but the opposite of what really happens. Authentically engaging this technique of disarming demonstrates you have the strength and power to be vulnerable. It demonstrates that you care about their experience and point of view and interests and not just your own – and thus enhances their willingness to trust you and accept you as a leader. It builds so called ‘soft-power’; the power to influence. When we disarm by finding some truth in their view we are definitely NOT agreeing with their entire picture of the universe. It is quite different than accepting blame, or admitting legal liability (although it can feel that risky to one’s ego). All we are doing is finding at least a kernel in the complaint or criticism that we can believe may be true, even if this is merely the truth that they do *feel* a certain way based on how they are looking at what’s happening. The main thing is that you generate authentic openness to the possibility that they have a valid and coherent point of view – and you demonstrate enough respect for them enough to be curious about it.

**Complainer***: “Dammit Bob, all you ever do is tell me what I’m missing, or what’s late! Do you realize how much stuff I handled last week? Do you?”*

**You (Disarming)**: *“It’s true, I haven’t told you how much I appreciate your hard work lately… I didn’t realize how I was coming across.”*

**You (Empathizing and Inquiring)***: “I hear you are frustrated…” “I am interested in understanding what you’ve been dealing with. Tell me more.”*

**CONNECT & REDIRECT** – **Model speaking to what you want, connecting and redirecting by referring to things you both care about**. Once you have begun to connect you’ve ‘earned the right’ to redirect the person’s attention and energy. You help them change focus from Problem / Victim to Outcome / Creator orientation. Speak to your own feelings with “I” statements instead of arguing. Ask them to express what they want. If you are really present you are likely to be able to discern and then speak to this even if they are struggling to see it clearly themselves. Say Yes! to valid priorities, desires, goals, values that are the source of their anger or anxiety.

**You (Redirecting and speaking to what you want)***: “I want you always to be aware of my appreciation for your hard work… I guess I lost track of how I was coming across because I’ve been so focused on the money we’ll lose if we deliver late on the ACME contract...” “It is really important we find a way to deliver this on time and not get dinged. I’d like to do a better job of staying aligned on priorities and timing going forward... How do you think we could do that?”*