

THE L-I-V-E FORMULA

Live Through Any Conflict



LEAN in and LISTEN

Listen, listen, listen. They can't listen to you until they feel heard:

"Tell me more about that."

"So _____ is really important to you?"



INVESTIGATE, SHOW YOUR POSITIVE INTENTION

Show your intention to have a positive outcome:

"I really want (positive intention) ... for you, for us, for this situation."

"What happened?"

"When did this happen?"

"What led up to this?" (*Better than "Why did this happen?" or "Why did you do that?" which can sound accusatory*)

Empathize and, if need be, apologize:

"That sounds really hard. I'm really sorry that happened to you." Or "Please forgive me."

Throughout, paraphrase, keep checking that you're truly understanding them:

"What I hear you saying is... Is that right?"

"Let me know if I am on track. It seems you're feeling... Am I understanding correctly?"

"When you say ____ do you mean ____ or _____?"

Try to get them to focus on one concern at a time:

"Is this the main thing that keeps you from getting what you want?"

"Is this the thing that concerns you the most?"

"I'd really like to handle this one issue to both our satisfaction, then I know we can be successful handling the other issues as well. Is that okay with you?"



VISION

When it seems they feel heard (you see a shift in their breathing, their muscles relax, their emotions are calming down):

- "Before we started this conversation, you felt _____. Is that feeling changing at all? What needs to happen so that feeling is completely taken care of?"
- "What is most important to you here?"
- "What would make you feel this situation has been handled?"
- "What would be a satisfying outcome for you?"



EXPECTATIONS

- "If you were in charge of making sure your vision happened, what would you do next?"
- "Here is what I'm willing to do..."
- "Would you be willing to...?" (No – "Then what would you be willing to do?")
- "Does it feel as if we have an understanding?"
- "So we've agreed that our next steps are..."
- "Will that work for you?"
- "Let's get back on (date) and check in to see that our plan is working."

NOTES ON
THE L-I-V-E FORMULA
(As seen in Susan O'Halloran's book
The Smooth Traveller: Avoiding Cross-Cultural Mistakes at Home and Abroad)

Remember to:

- Show appreciation – it's better to know what someone thinks about you than people talking behind your back. There is some degree of connection between you two if this person has come directly to you with their upset or complaint. Re-frame their criticism as constructive even if they are doing a poor job expressing it constructively.
- Paraphrase, empathize and check that you are hearing them throughout. Paraphrase and restate their concerns. SHOW your intention to truly understand them. Don't assume you know what is upsetting them.
- Don't take feedback personally but do take it responsibly. They are telling you lots about themselves (what they want, don't like, what previously happened to them and so forth) and, *perhaps*, something you may need to look at and change. Be responsible for making appropriate changes, but remember their comments are never about your importance or worth as a person. Even if you've made a mistake or have been insensitive, one interaction or even several do not define you. Apologize and learn from your mistake.
- Consider the feedback as growth. If you're lucky, you are given opportunities to continually learn.
- You may have to direct them to a more respectful communication with you – later, after they have had their say and feel fully heard. At an appropriate time, most likely at a separate meeting, let them know how they can best approach you in the future with a respectful "I" message instead of accusatory labels.
- Clarify and confirm all expectations and mutually agree on your next steps.

Keep all agreements and/or re-negotiate.
Don't let the momentum fade.
Remember, trust is built over time.

(Based on the work of Bea Young Associates www.BeaYoung.com, Perrone-Ambrose Associates www.Perrone-Ambrose.com and O'Halloran Diversity Productions www.SusanOHalloran.com)