



June , 2006

- Developing Life Skills
- The most important life skills – Part 2

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### Developing Life Skills

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The life skills of questioning, listening, and speaking look innocently simple enough that everyone should be able to pull them off.

Not so.

Case in point, can you remember a time when you were in a conversation with a close friend on a sensitive issue, or not so sensitive (like driving directions) and you realized that there was a huge gap in understanding between the two of you?

This is where the lens of perception and the way you 'see' in your mind, impacts meaning and understanding. Different kinds of thinkers use their different processors to receive the message. The information gets distorted while passing through several filters. The first is belief. If you don't believe something is true, facts won't change your mind. Logic has never won over emotion. The second biggest filter is the lens of perception. While the dictionary and academic definition sees perception as a process, it is also a lens simply because it is how you see the world that shapes how you interpret the information you receive.

Increasing your perceptiveness means taking action to develop the degrees of sensory and cognitive depth and clarity that make a difference to how you see, hear and interpret the emotional data coming at you. Only 7% is encoded in the words.

The MOST challenging communication or interpersonal settings are the ones where you have the opportunity to ramp up your skill set. Maybe not in that

very moment since it is usually hindsight that informs, but it is using reflection as the rear view mirror that gives you the edge on seeing how to improve. This is not about 'fixing' the other person. It is about assisting yourself to become more effective as a communicator. The next set of skills adds new abilities and applies some of the basic set of skills to your life.

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### The Most Important Life Skills - Part Two of Three Parts

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1. **Self-Discipline:** This is what horses have that keeps them from betting on people. A simple definition for self-discipline I found on a blog by Steve Pavlina. "Self-discipline is the ability to get yourself to take action regardless of your emotional state." Example: I am at my daughter's soccer game and see that without being told, there is not much in the way of stretching or warming up going on. The girls start the game fairly cold. Now we know and they know that this is a fairly good way to get injured. But conversation about the latest shoe purchase, or who did what to who (gossip) proved more attractive. The element of peer pressure discourages even the few who recognized the need to prepare.

**Self-discipline helps us stay on the path when it would be easier to stray or submit to other temptations like distraction, procrastination or avoiding something possibly scary.**

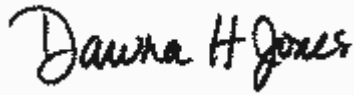
2. **Curiosity:** Dogs demonstrate abundant curiosity and mostly lead by their noses. To put it in Einstein's words, "the important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality." Asking questions is the tool, particularly when the questions can not be answered by the logical mind. The kind and quality of the questions you ask yourself is a skill set developed over time. Based on my experience, training management to utilize questions to assess situations before taking action creates lots of room to strengthen and deepen the art of asking questions. Questioning was covered in the last ezine issue. You apply it by being curious.

*Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton asked why.*

3. **Focus:** There is an Ayurveda practice of Marma learned from Dr. Pankaj Naram, which involves pressing at the point at the top of your nose between your eyes six times and then focusing (fixing) your eyes on one point without blinking. A seasoned practitioner can hold that pose for 30 minutes without blinking. I started thinking about how my contacts or eyes (depending on how awake I was) and bingo I blinked. It is a great way of seeing how long you can focus for and what that tells you about how to use focus to expand what you seek to achieve, remembering that what we focus on expands.
4. **Flexibility:** The other side of focus is to remember that without being able to flexibly expand your lens you will miss other information that can inform what you are trying to achieve. This operates about the same way that your eyes do to let more or less light in only we are talking about your thinking instead of your eyes. If you are so focused that you don't hear the phone, or the house is on fire (Ok I am exaggerating but maybe not if you are or live with a musician) then balancing focus with the wide angle lens is a helpful thing.
5. **Meditation:** Unless you can shut off the noise, it is tough to hear what you know already. For those of you who have given meditation a try and felt like a complete failure, there is hope. Two tools that I know of and that I know work are below. Test out what kind of tools work for you. You also have the option of training yourself to get into those delta or theta states but I do not have the patience.
  - **Holosync** ([www.centerpointe.com/links.php?ad=30889](http://www.centerpointe.com/links.php?ad=30889)). Definitely order the sampler so you can feel the impact. Even if you see yourself as a wizard at mediation, give this a try. Don't expect to see change instantly—though you might. Remember that expectations set you up for self-created conflict. Just allow Holosync to do its work.
  - A biofeedback tool called the Wild Divine is another way of training yourself to achieve the state of inner calm.  
<http://www.myaffiliateprogram.com/u/wdivine/e.asp?e=3&id=3306>

Both tools facilitate the conversation between you and your unconscious. This is what you are looking for. Affirmations stated without feeling just run through your mental processor. Affirmations encoded **with emotion** go straight to your cells.

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