



**Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable & Farm Market EXPO
Michigan Greenhouse Growers EXPO**

December 5-7, 2017

DeVos Place Convention Center, Grand Rapids, MI



Farm Marketing Workshop D: Managing with HEART: Making Caring Communication the Heart of Your Farm

Where: Grand Gallery (main level) Room A & B

A workshop designed to teach listening, speaking, team-building and conflict resolution skills to bring out the best in family members and employees.

HEART

H - Hear and understand me

E - Even if I am wrong, don't make me wrong

A - Appreciate the greatness within me

R - Recognize my positive intent

T - Tell me the truth with compassion

Moderator: Charles Gould, Ottawa County MSUE, West Olive, MI

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| 9:00 am | Managing with HEART: Making Caring Communication the Heart of Your Farm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Val Farmer, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Farm Family Consultant and Mediator, Wildwood, MO |
| 11:00 am | Session Ends |

“Managing with HEART: Making Caring Communication the Heart of Your Farm

Val Farmer - Dec. 7, 2017

- Anger and temper problems are destructive in relationships and need to be nipped in the bud through disengagement, self-control, patience, and choosing more thoughtful ways to express frustrations.
- How a person feels about you after a discussion is more important than the problem you are trying to solve.

- During times of crisis, a couple needs to go through adversity together and communicate well, minimize conflict and be mutually supportive.

- It is important to resolve past hurts and misunderstandings through empathic listening, mutual apologies and forgiveness.

- It is important that expressions of forgiveness be understood and made explicit.

What makes a good apology?

1. Take responsibility for the pain and hurt you caused
2. Make your apology specific, detailed, honest, and truthful. Describe the harm you caused.
3. Make your apology heartfelt.
4. Make your apology clean.
5. Make a specific commitment not to reoffend.
6. Make whatever amends are possible.
7. Be patient. Apologize repeatedly. Allow the other person time to process their grief and the apology.

When farming with adult children, it is important to be open to ideas, delegate meaningful responsibility and share decisions in the spirit of true partnership.

Team building in the Family

1. Mutual goals, values, and purpose
2. Mutual trust and respect
3. Effective communication and conflict resolution
4. Having meaningful responsibility, providing personal opportunities for growth and creativity, accountability, given recognition and appreciation
5. Specialization

Managing with HEART

Hear and understand me

Even if I am wrong, don't make me wrong

Appreciate the greatness within me

Recognize my positive intent

Tell me the truth with compassion

Teaching conversational etiquette



Lifting a burden off each other's shoulders

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Leading and Managing With HEART

Dr. Val Farmer - 2/9/2004

What makes a good organization? What makes a well-functioning civic or service group? How do people work together to accomplish common goals?

1. Caring leadership. Leaders make a difference. Good leaders generate trust and respect. They do this by being honest, good, fair, reliable and consistent. They set the example for others to follow.

Good leaders care about others and their needs. They recognize the need for feelings of importance, accomplishment, meaning, recognition and appreciation. Regular recognition and appreciation help team members understand how much their contribution is valued. Leaders care how the organization impacts the well-being of the people in it.

Good leaders recognize value in other people's ideas and facilitate interactions that draw out the opinions and creative problem-solving capabilities of everyone. The leader's trust and respect for others opens the door for others to be involved, committed and active participants in the group effort. Innovation, trust, caring and respect are the glue that makes everything work. These attitudes start at the top.

2. Common vision, goals and planning. Good leaders have vision and communicate it effectively. Vision, goals and plans define what jobs and responsibilities need to be filled. Goals also set criteria for measuring success and taking corrective action.

Goals and plans define future needs for specialties and skills within the organization. A program for growth and development helps prepare associates to willingly measure up to their present responsibilities and to prepare to meet future needs.

3. Growth and development. Work fulfills important personal needs. Work, as much as possible, should be exciting, enjoyable, stimulating and challenging. People thrive on responding to challenge. They need to grow into greater responsibilities.

Everyone should be a learner and continue to expand their horizons. Organizations need to encourage and support training and development experiences. Individual and group goals can dovetail and play to a team member's strengths and interests. Hopefully, team members see future roles and niches for themselves within the organization that match their personal needs and goals. The organization benefits by increasing the specialized capabilities of its members.

4. Communications and problem solving. Challenges, opportunities and problems are shared freely. Unity is created when team members see themselves as problem-definers, problem-solvers and decision-makers. Commitment grows stronger when team members are included in the goal selection, planning, and implementation process. Better solutions to problems happen when everyone contributes their ideas.

Effective personal and group communications allow conflict to emerge, discussion to flow and for ideas to build upon one another. The best ideas win.

The atmosphere should be open, challenging and respectful. Discussion should be kept within a favorable framework of goodwill and a manageable range of emotions so that conflict doesn't become counterproductive.

5. Personal responsibility and accountability. Group goals are accomplished by everyone doing their part. There is work to be done, roles to be filled, assignments to be completed, deadlines to meet, and results to be evaluated.

Jobs and assignments are undertaken with clear understandings and commitments. This isn't a heavy-handed process but one governed by comparing outcomes with desired results. People evaluate themselves by criteria they help develop. Leadership is three quarters "show the way" and one quarter "follow up."

Managing with heart. Jack Rosenblum, EdD, JD, of Deerfield, Massachusetts has coined an acronym HEART for communication skills that captures how employees and associates want to be treated in relationships.

"H" stands for "hear and understand me." Good listening involves showing interest, curiosity, openness to new ideas. Body language and tone of voice that indicate attentiveness, concern and interest help. People show respect by observing basic conversational etiquette of honoring each other's right to the floor and drawing them out so they feel completely understood.

Don't interrupt. Validate his or her point of view whenever you can honestly do so.

"E" stands for "even if I am 'wrong, don't make me wrong." People can disagree without being disagreeable. Don't kill the messenger because you don't happen to like the message. How a person feels about you after a conflict discussion is more important than the problem you were able to solve. Don't use sarcasm, blame, find fault or personal attacks. Agree to disagree.

"A" stands for "appreciate the greatness within me." Abundant appreciation and recognition put the total relationship in a positive context. Be grateful and acknowledge the admiration and positive regard for the contributions others make. People need to feel how special they really are.

"R" stands for "recognize my positive intent." Most people aren't intentionally trying to inflict harm or hurt. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Don't focus on the mistake. Stay with the intent of their actions. Don't overreact to offensive or provocative statements or quibble with "untrue" details.

Don't question their motives or commitment to change. Don't tell them what they "really" think or feel.

"T" stands for "tell me the truth with compassion." Be sensitive to moods, needs and responsibilities before confronting a serious topic. Be tactful and tentative in the way you talk about something that might affect other's feelings. Start a difficult conversation slowly and softly so the listener can hear your message without arousing his or her defenses or emotions.

Shield your associates from your anger, harsh judgments, and pointed criticisms by taking time to set your own mood and thoughts before confronting an issue. Be sensitive to their need to disengage and process emotional information before pushing for a solution.

Communication Skills for Resolving Conflict

Val Farmer – 11/21/2017

Setting the Stage for Communications:

How you feel about each other after you've discussed a topic is more important than the problem you were trying to solve. The process should be positive, not an ordeal. It is vitally important to know how to disagree with another's point of view without being disagreeable.

Time and place. Sensitivity to time and location should be taken into account. Stress levels, privacy, and a partner's readiness to engage on the topic should be considered.

Listen first to understand. By listening to your partner first, you may prevent saying things based on wrong assumptions. If your partner feels heard, it will lower his or her defensiveness when it is your turn to take the floor. Understanding each other is a prelude to problem-solving and negotiations.

Solutions have to fit both of your needs. Try to learn and understand what problem your partner needs to have solved. Workable solutions have to fit both of your needs.

State positive intent. Affirm love and concern for the relationship and willingness to be constructive and resolve the issue to his or her satisfaction. Acknowledge the validity of your partner's point of view and indicate your willingness to listen.

One person has the floor at a time. Whoever is speaking deserves respect, a good listener, and the right to be heard and understood. Only one person should speak at a time. If the listener asks to have the floor and his or her request is granted, the former speaker becomes the new listener.

Asking for the floor is effective if you have first demonstrated that you understand. Let the speaker finish his or her thoughts before requesting the floor. Don't use it as a ploy to take over the conversation. The speaker is the judge on whether or not to yield the floor. Both speaker and listener should use conversational etiquette to offer or request the floor when the timing is right.

Guidelines for the Speaker:

Part of communicating is to speak so the defenses of the other party are reduced. I've seen people state their truth in such an aggressive and abrasive manner that communication breaks down immediately. An action/reaction cycle defeats any meaningful communication almost from the start.

My usual advice is to be aware of body language, tone of voice, and to shorten up points to fit the attention span of the listener. I also encourage speakers to invite summaries that show understanding and to soften up communications by using conditional and tentative expressions that show respect and openness to other's ideas. Non-abrasive words and expressions can be tactfully chosen to minimize defensiveness.

Soft start up. Be calm. Ease into the discussion by stating what you agree on. Describe your feelings while consciously using approachable body language and a soft, caring tone of voice. Anger or emphatic language is likely to create defensiveness and anger in return. Describe problems in a way that preserves your partner's dignity or self-respect.

Minimize inflammatory or exaggerated statements. Avoid verbal expressions that can be disputed or be considered offensive or judgmental. Choose milder expressions that convey the meaning so that the listener isn't distracted by the way something was said, factual inaccuracies or disrespect.

Use "conditional" language. Start with conditional phrases such as, "It seems to me.", or "You may feel differently but this how I feel"... By being tentative in your assertions, you acknowledge that there are two sides to the issue and you will be willing to hear your partner's side at the appropriate time.

By changing the way something is said, a tone of respect and openness is communicated. This is done by qualifying one's comments, by using tentative language and by acknowledging the validity of another's point of view. A speaker communicates effectively when he or she becomes comfortable with softening up their language and opinions.

Don't overload. Be aware of your partner's attention span. Pause periodically and ask for feedback that indicates understanding. Watch for signs of emotion that might interfere with his or her ability to concentrate. Be willing to yield the floor if your partner is unable to concentrate or listen.

Stay on topic. Keep your focus on the problem you are trying to resolve. Be specific. Give "here and now" examples. Secondary issues will invite unneeded complexity to your objective.

Develop an emotional vocabulary. Good communicators develop an emotional vocabulary to express their inner feelings and experiences. Describing emotions, talking from the heart, and giving non-judgmental attention to others feelings promotes connection and unity.

People need to really open up and say their true feelings. With the miracle of dialogue and understanding, bridges can be crossed, helping hands are extended and genuine caring is shared.

The truth hurts. The truth also heals. The art of communicating is to tell the truth so that it can be understood. The art of communicating is to tell your truth with compassion. But the truth needs to be told. Even the best listeners can't fill in the gap of what is not shared.

Allow time for processing information. Be willing to let go and allow time for your partner to think about what was said and to re-engage on the topic when he or she is ready to respond.

End on a positive note. Close with an expression of love and appreciation for the opportunity to discuss a difficult subject. Describe your hopeful outlook that further discussion will bring you closer together in resolving this issue.

The importance of listening:

Listening is an act of love. It is a gift to others who counts on you as a trusted confidant and as a gentle and loving source of feedback. Become vulnerable to the truth of your partners' and associates' lives, knowing full well that what you hear may require change, share burdens and to reorder priorities.

Listening is important because:

- it communicates a willingness to learn about the speaker's needs and feelings. To really know what those needs are is the first step to meeting those needs. Without empathic listening, we may miss the mark in meeting the speaker's most important emotional needs.
- it shows a willingness to engage in a reciprocal relationship where you allow your thoughts, feelings and decisions to be open to influence and persuasion. It palpably demonstrates equality in the marriage. It shows a recognition that accommodation and negotiations are essential to resolving differences.
- it demonstrates caring, a sacrifice of time and attention and a conscious effort to join together in unity. It is through listening that emotional intimacy is nurtured and true support and sustenance are exchanged.
- it is by listening that problems are understood and conflicts are resolved.

Why is listening hard? If listening opens the pathway to problem-solving and unity of effort, why is it so hard?

It could be that some people are hesitant because of what it may require. It does take a loving and humble heart to take responsibility for caring about what one learns. To listen well and not respond will cause greater pain than if the message was never heard.

In marriage, partnership or business relationship the choice has already been made to give up part of one's autonomy and to have other lives intertwined and interdependent with yours. To avoid dealing with the details and reality of other's inner emotional life out of laziness, selfishness, power or fear can be interpreted as a lack of caring and, at worst, a form of desertion.

Listening isn't easy. Others struggle because they don't know how to listen. Listening is hard. Good listening requires the ability to detach from one's own strong emotions, desires, and goals in order to emotionally enter another's world - to understand and care about it. Here are some reasons why good-hearted people struggle with listening.

- Emotional flooding. People become poor listeners when they are flooded with their own thoughts and emotions while their partners/spouse/employees are speaking. They can't put themselves in someone else's shoes because they are too worried about making their own shoes fit better. Feelings of, "What about me?" sometimes surge to the surface, despite intentions to listen. This may be connected with their own emotional history and lack of trust that his or her own needs will not be met.

Sometimes the inability to concentrate can be dealt with by being listened to first. Once he or she has expressed his or her issues and felt listened to, the emotional intrusion will hopefully subside.

- Overload. Another problem with poor listening is being overloaded with too much information. This can be as simple as the speaker going on and on, well beyond the limits of one's attention span. Sometimes it could be the significance or emotional intensity of what is being said that can produce an overload.

This problem can be corrected by interrupting the speaker and letting him or her know that you need to summarize your understanding before he or she proceeds further. This will help the speaker know the

limits of your attention span. You can also help the speaker know when you are starting to lose emotional control and that it is beginning to interfere with your ability to listen.

- Interruptions. Another problem is the unwillingness of the listener to allow the speaker to finish his or her line of thinking before intruding with one's own ideas or reactions. In ordinary conversations, we speak at a rate of between 125 -150 words a minute and we can comprehend about twice that much.

What do you think our 300 word a minute mind is doing when the speaker is verbalizing at a paltry 130 or 140 words a minute rate? We think our own thoughts, jump ahead, assume we know where the speaker is heading, prepare our rebuttal or helpful advice, and become anxious. Finally, we cut to the chase. We interrupt with our golden nuggets of wisdom - or worse – our side of the issue before the speaker feels understood.

Turning a Poor Listener into a Good Listener:

A speaker is often confronted with a listener jumping in and interrupting with their thoughts, opinions, advice, counter-arguments or pearls of wisdom. The speaker doesn't know whether to listen respectfully and respond to what they just heard or to redouble their efforts to be heard. The speaker doesn't feel listened to and feels frustrated. What do you think the speaker will do?

To become a good listener, learn to control and hold your thoughts by following these simple rules:

1). *Listen with a caring heart.* Use appropriate body language, tone of voice, and timely and empathic touch to show you care about the message you are hearing. Don't use body language or tone of voice to show disbelief, contempt, or disinterest in what is being said. Non-verbal communication such as body language, facial expressions, a soft and warm tone of voice and inflection communicate emotion, caring and interest.

What do you believe – a person's words, their tone of voice or their body language? Research findings show that if there is a discrepancy between the various modes of communication, 7 percent rely on the words, 38 percent rely on the tone of voice, and 55 percent rely on body language. If the three modes of communication match up and are congruent, belief in words rises to about 33 percent while belief in tone of voice and body language drop to about 33 percent each.

2) *When you are listening, your only job is to show understanding.* Your purpose in listening isn't to gather information so you can attack or win an argument with your rebuttal argument.

Being a good listener also doesn't mean you are showing agreement with the speaker, only that you understand his or her thoughts and feelings. The time to state your side will come when you gain the floor in the discussion. By really listening, you soften your own heart, learn new ideas, give empathy, communicate interest, show respect, and demonstrate you are open to influence.

This is done by paraphrasing the key points being made. Verify your understanding by *checking it out* with the speaker on what he or she meant. If in doubt, ask for a clarification or have the point repeated.

Interrupt only if you are feeling overloaded. Let the speaker know when you are being emotionally or overloaded with too much information. Summarize your understanding thus far and then suggest that the speaker continue sharing. Interruptions, except for issues around attention span, are not constructive.

3) ***Stay in the listener role.*** You can't give your own opinion, counter-argument or ask leading questions to slip in your own opinion. The listener needs to avoid interruptions or questions that take the speaker off topic and prematurely disrupt the speaker's flow of thought.

With no permission to respond, the listener's power of concentration is totally focused on the understanding the message of the speaker. Without competition from their own thoughts or personal agenda, a listener can process what is being said. It is easier to listen when there is no intention to respond with intelligent, witty or critical remarks.

Ignore or soften up inflammatory comments. If confronted with exaggerations, inaccuracies or provocative statements, choose milder language to summarize the intent of the message and avoid reacting to the way it was given.

Ignore or soften up inflammatory comments. If confronted with exaggerations, inaccuracies or provocative statements, choose milder language to summarize the intent of the message and avoid reacting to the way it was given. Use emotional control to detach from your side of the issue until you have gained the floor.

4) ***Learn to ask open ended questions and draw the speaker out*** by helping him or her express even deeper meanings that might have been originally intended. Be curious. Be intuitive. "Read" feelings and ask questions that will help draw the speaker out even more. The speaker is the authority on what he or she meant. Accept his or her explanations at face value.

The listener needs to adopt a curious attitude about what the speaker is saying and to gently probe for further details and explanations. By being a sounding board and asking good questions, the speaker can use the listener's feedback as a springboard to deeper background and share emotional experiences connected to their opinions.

5). ***Stay in the listener role until the speaker is fully satisfied that he or she has been understood.*** Make sure to inquire if there is anything else the speaker wants to say on the topic before requesting the floor.

By following these simple rules, you can now turn loose your 300 word a minute mind on what your 130 word speaker is saying and do a wonderful job of listening.

Why can conflict be a good thing?

- Conflict indicates genuine concern. It represents the values and assumptions that underlie emotions. Emotions, even raw anger, are a sign that people care.
- Conflict shows engagement. People feel safe enough to bring up their ideas with the goal of working through their differences. For this to occur, the process has to be respectful and courteous.
- Conflict gives participants a chance to clarify their own and other's emotions and values.
- When problems aren't confronted, conflict can escalate and easily grow in intensity and magnitude.
- While engaging in conflict resolution, concerns that are large in scope emerge. Better ideas and solutions are generated as a result.

Coming to an agreement:

Conflict resolution is difficult when parties often jump too quickly into finding solutions without taking time to really understand each other.

By communicating and understanding each other, each party can learn about the perceptions, needs, motivations and desires of the other. How? It is the art of asking good questions and *really* listening to the answers. In addition, it requires identifying and explaining one's own interests, perspective and feelings in such a way that your partner can understand your point of view.

The key to problem-solving is solving the other person's problem *as you solve your own.* When you come to a common definition of the problem and understand each other's views, then you are in a position to propose and generate solutions. Too many people skip the understanding and listening part and jump into problem-solving. That doesn't work well.

The question becomes, "Now that we agree on what is wrong, what can we do about it?" It is time to brainstorm for alternatives. Pros and cons are weighed. A decision needs to be clearly made and commitments given toward a specific plan. Details need to be fleshed out. Thinking time is important.

Get to an agreement. Try hypothetical statements as trial balloons. Be open and receptive to ideas. Look for middle ground or a solution that satisfies both of your needs. There are many ways of resolving conflict and each can be successful - compromise, accommodation, declaring a moratorium, agreeing to disagree, and collaboration. Give a clear commitment and expect the same from the other party.

Set a time to review and evaluate the agreement. The plan can be implemented on a trial basis. A time frame is set aside to review how the plan is going and to make any necessary adjustments. Following through and honoring your commitments will lead to further problem-solving and develop a relationship of trust.