

## Chiropractic Communications

Okay, let's take a look at how you're taking a look at things. We are all unique observers. There are three aspects of ourselves that define and create our realities. Those aspects are: 1. Our use of language 2. Our emotions 3. Our body language.

Let's focus on the language. As linguistic beings, we use 5 'speech acts' to communicate. Speech acts are methods of communication that allow for our words to describe our worlds and, **they actually generate our realities!** They are:

1. Assertions
2. Assessments
3. Declarations
4. Requests
5. Promises

I've chosen to write about 'requests' today, since good requests are such an integral and important part of running a successful chiropractic office.

What follows are eleven key elements of an effective request. Read through them and make a mental note of which ones you're proficient at and which ones you need practice on.

### **The Key Elements of an Effective Request**

**1. Committed Speaker** - You must be committed to what you are asking for; others can see and/or sense when you're not committed. Commitment also lives in the body, so check in with your body before making a request and ask the question, "Am I committed to what I'm about to ask for?"

**2. Committed Listener** - It's the speakers' responsibility to produce a committed listener. So, is the person you are about to make a request of "multitasking", or do you have their full, undivided attention? We know when we have a committed listener and when we don't.

**3. Something Missing** – We need to ask ourselves what is missing that we feel the need to make a request. We make requests because we want the future to unfold in a different way than it seems to be heading by itself, and in order to put things in action to bring this about; we make a request.

Example: Jean, I've received the goals for the first quarter of 2006, however will you give me a more detailed breakdown of each stat that we track at our weekly staff meetings?

**4. Specific Future Action** - What exactly is it that you want your request to accomplish? Often we are vague with the action we desire ("more support", "help with this"). We must spell out exactly what we want or the person listening will fill it in for us.

Example: "Will you please provide me a schedule of my patient visits today with my highlighted break times so I can determine the best time to work on our newsletter?"

**5. Conditions of Satisfaction** - For me, these are often included in #4 above. A question to ask is, "What are the conditions I want to see in order to be satisfied?" This

often helps create the specific future action in an effective request.

**6. Shared Background of Obviousness** - Often we have lived, or worked with one another long enough that we don't have to spell everything out. We can say what we need in a few words and the person listening knows exactly what we are asking for. Example: "John, can you provide me with the referral source for each of our new patients for the month of February?"

**7. Time Frame** - Specifically when do you want it? We must be specific so the listener clearly knows when it is expected. Example: This Friday, May 5 at noon vs. "sometime Friday" or "as soon as possible".

**8. Emotions/Moods** - What is the emotion or mood you bring to the request? And, equally important, what is the emotion or mood of your listener? Emotions and moods predispose us to act a certain way, so they are critical. They are also interpretive structures, so they influence the way your request is listened to.

**9. Trust** - Do you trust the person you are making the request of? If not, then there is really no point in making a request if you don't expect it to be kept.

**10. The Mode** - What are the actual words you use to make a request? Some examples are: I ask, I beg, I order, I suggest, I beseech, etc. Since language is generative, each of these can produce a different listening.

**11. The Context** - What is the context in which the request is taking place? If we say the words "I suggest that you do...", it is listened to differently depending on the context. If the context is love and support, it is listened to in a very spacious way. If the context is one of authority and obedience, it is listened to with narrow possibility to say no.

This seems simple on paper, but how many times have we, as chiropractors, been in a foul mood, asked for what seemed like a simple request and compliance was virtually non-existent? There's an old saying that says, **'If you've got the right conversation but the wrong mood, you've got the wrong conversation'**...and mood is only one of these elements.

Share these key elements with partners, staff, associates and loved ones. Since you are creating your own life in large part out of the language that you use, why not take a closer look at what you're communicating or attempting to communicate? Requests are profoundly creative!

Thanks for looking after yourself and looking deeper into this work. Here's what you'll get out of it:

Peace, joy and productivity,

Dr. Herby Bell

\*Language and the Pursuit of Happiness by Chalmers Brothers; New Possibilities Press; 2005  
The Newfield Network; 2006

## **FOR HOLISTIC PRACTICE AND LIFESTYLE**

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