



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Good Intentions

If you want your good intentions to land, make sure it's actually YOU delivering the message and not one of your well-intentioned but misguided parts like the "fixer" or the "problem-solver." (See the previous issue for more.)

Things to Try...

After you've tried to make the appointment and had the first conversation at an agreed upon time, make sure to follow-up with each other. Did the concern get addressed? How well did addressing it go? What else might need to be adjusted to fully address it?

About Shane

I'm a Registered Psychologist, husband, and father of three boys (5, 3, 1). I grew up in Calgary, and completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Victoria. I enjoyed a busy Christmas Holiday season in Calgary this year with my family and friends after weather interfered with travel.



Making Appointments for Important Conversations

Think about the last time you wanted to talk about something important with someone important. If it didn't go well here is likely the reason why: timing.

Timing is important. You might even argue that there is never a good time for some important conversations, and to that I would partially agree. However, even if we think ahead and determine "now is the time" this doesn't mean the person who we need to talk to is ready. And, if the conversation didn't go well my guess is even if you were ready, they weren't.

Here are some steps to help make these important conversations happen:

1. **Make an appointment:** Tell the person what you would like to talk about and then ask them when is a good time to talk about it. Schedule it and follow through.



Tips for Dads & Moms

Know your role. One of the biggest challenges facing kids these days are their ability to be just that – kids. Ever catch yourself telling your children to:

- “Grow up!”
- “Take care of your brother/sister.”

Or, perhaps you told them about issues in your marriage or co-parenting relationship with their other parent...

Stop! Your kids are just kids and need to be reassured of this. Their role is not “grow up faster” so it’s easier for you to parent, or become a “mini-parent” of their younger siblings. They are certainly not peers to confide in when you and your partner or ex-partner are having an argument.

These scenarios increase anxiety for kids, and lower their self-concept because their ability to satisfy these requests are futile. Instead remind yourself where they’re at developmentally, remind them you are the parent and they get to be the brother/sister, and of course keep grown-up conversations with the grown-ups.

2. Before the appointment check in with yourself: See if you can note what your intention is by having the conversation. Are you sharing information, raising a concern, and do you need a resolution?
3. Whatever your intention is, reframe it with parts language: “A part of me is concerned about...” or “A part of me needs you to know...” or “A part of me needs a resolution for...”
4. Use parts language when entering into the conversation with the other person: “A part of me is concerned about our finances this month.” “A part of me is/was stressed about seeing your folks over the holidays.”
5. Last, thank the person for making the time to *start* talking about the concern and ask for another appointment if further dialogue is required or an initial resolution is not reached.

I think you’ll find the combination of making an appointment and using parts language will get you and the other person more prepared to address the issue as well as provide a softer, more accurate description of your experience of the issue. Give it a try!



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Heads Up

May is Mental Health Awareness month, but statistically February may be the worst month for our mental health. Take care to take care.

Things to Try...

When you meet someone new, try asking them what they do for fun instead of what they do for work. See where that conversation takes you and discover so much more about a potential new friend.

About Shane

I'm a Registered Psychologist, husband, and father of three boys (5, 3, 1). I grew up in Calgary, and completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Victoria.

Joke of the day: How many psychologists does it take to change a lightbulb? Only 1, but the lightbulb has to really *want* to change!

If you have any good psychologist jokes, please send them my way!



New Years' Resolutions? Oh no you didn't!

Did you make a New Year's resolution? If you did, you're not alone! So many people continue to make them and include big changes, lofty goals, or proclamations to return to old/better habits.

To aspire to do what seems better to you is a wonderful idea and from the bottom of my heart, I hope you succeed! However, if you're like the vast majority of people who get excited about saying "goodbye" to a not so great year and "hello" to the hope of a fresh start, resolutions are often temporary and depending on how lofty you shoot, may fall flat quicker than you might expect. If you needed any evidence of this, just attend a gym in January when it's packed, and then drop-in at the end of February and it's empty!

My take: A resolution is essentially a change. I have for a long time always told my clients I don't like the word "change."



Tips for Dads & Moms

Co-parenting is tough, especially if parents seem like they approach situations from the opposite direction. Of course this may be even more apparent when co-parents are separated or divorced and consistency between households is the challenge.

Just like you have to schedule pick-ups and drop-offs, it is also of considerable benefit to your kids if you schedule their routines. Kids like structure—especially kids who have, or we think have, additional challenges such as ADHD.

I like whiteboards. They can be changed weekly or monthly, you can get different colour markers to mean different things, and it makes for easy editing. If you have a family schedule, put it somewhere the whole family can see it. If it's for your child(ren), put it in their room. I suggest 15-30 minute chunks and depending on the child's age, filling those chunks of time may look quite different.

Snack, homework, dinner, chores, play. Do the activities that require the most energy/motivation first.

Instead, I prefer the word “adjustment.” Adjustments are manageable, easy to make, and create significant, sustainable differences in the longer term.

Here's the metaphor I use: Down in the US there is an area in Utah called the Salt Flats. It's an area where cars drag race, some of which go hundreds of miles per hour on a straight line. Now traveling that fast from point A to point B works well at high speeds so long as you keep the steering wheel straight. If you make even the smallest adjustment, point B will change significantly. But, what happens when you make a big change in the way most New Years' resolutions are and crank the wheel? Well, point B would change, but you'd likely be doing barrel rolls and flying into pieces before reaching your final destination well ahead of where you'd hoped to be. My advice: keep making small adjustments because in the long run your destination changes significantly as a result but in the short term you won't crash and burn.

Life moves quickly. Make the adjustments you need to sustain yourself and your lifestyle in positive, life-affirming ways.



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