



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Rainy Days, Cozy Days

Just like snow at Christmas time, I'm hoping for some rain for Spring, not snow, rain. Ha!

Remember...

Listening is a two-way street. If we want to be heard by others, practice good listening and model what that looks like for folks you're in contact with. Modelling goes a lot further than lecturing or demanding something you're not doing great at yourself. A good reminder for all of us.

About Shane

With Spring on our doorstep, outdoor activities beckon. My two older boys will be in t-ball and baseball in May and June, but not to worry, martial arts remains on Saturdays!

I think one of the important lessons I can teach my kids is to help them see that practice makes progress in whatever they're interested in. Talent? Sure, but progress is made possible by practice.



How do you know when you're really heard?

A common complaint when I work with couples and kids is: "They don't listen to me" or "My parents don't get it." Knowing when we're really heard is important because when you know this, you'll also know when *you* have really heard someone else. One of the techniques I have heard over the years both in formal and informal education as well as well-intentioned attempts by clients is the use of empathy.

If we understand empathy as understanding we are certainly on the right track, but this isn't actually the first step. It's not even the second step. It is a very important third step. So let's backtrack to the first step and get you set up for empathy.

The first step in feeling heard or hearing someone else is a communication technique known as "mirroring." Mirroring is just what it sounds like: sending back the message you heard to the person who sent it. When we do this well, we have to pay



Tips for Dads & Moms

As I alluded to in the main story of this newsletter, already knowing—or thinking you know—your kiddo’s perspective, reason, objection, etc. is the hardest thing to set aside. Doing so is the only way to really set up space for really listening and communicating to your kiddo that you get them.

Now, don’t mistake getting them with agreeing with them. Getting them—allowing them to feel heard—is not positively correlated with your kiddo “getting to yes.” In fact, hearing and making a decision about your child’s request (demand, haha), can be and ought to be mutually exclusive. We want our kids to get that we get them, even if the answer is ultimately still “no.”



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attention to the message so that we can *accurately mirror* the message back to the sender as they sent it. No embellishments or distortions (convex mirroring), no leaving parts out we don’t think are important (concave mirroring), just sending back exactly what we heard them say. The latter is called “flat mirroring.”

Flat mirroring can occur in a verbatim fashion where every word we say back is accounted for and exact, or in a summary fashion where not every word is exact, but the message is accurately portrayed and nothing of importance has been added or left out. While most people I have worked with prefer mirrored summaries, some people request verbatim mirroring to be certain of accuracy and to guarantee there won’t be any interpretations. The person sending the message needs to let the receiver of the message know what kind of flat mirroring they would prefer.

How come this isn’t our default way of listening? Well, with couples who “know each other” after being together for x number of months, years, decades, they already know what their partner means when they say anything, so accurately listening and mirroring seems like a waste of time and energy to them. For parents of kids who say their folks “don’t get it” it’s likely because the parents already know why their kiddo has the perspective they have, so they don’t have to listen, they simply desire compliance.

To this I say, yes, they probably do “know each other” and they probably already know their kiddo’s perspective. But feeling heard and being heard is more than knowing a person or their perspective, it’s actually creating a space for safety in communication.

Mirroring demonstrates we are present and paying attention to every word that is sent our way. It shows that we are not distracted by our own biases, preconceived notions, history-taking, and parts of us that may be reacting emotionally. Mirroring creates an expectation for future conversations. When someone tells you something and you mirror it back, you communicate you actually heard it. Your response becomes the receipt for the message sent.

There’s lots of connective things about communication, two more of which will follow in subsequent issues of this newsletter; however, the start of this better communication journey begins with accurate, flat mirroring, and the subsequent creation of a predictable, safe space to connect and communicate.