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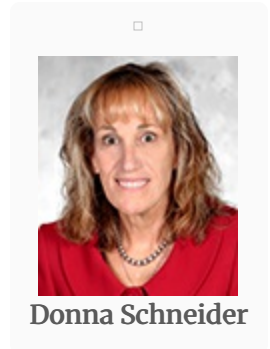
Two superpowers to control your emotions: Curiosity and positivity

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This column focuses on useful tips the author has used to work through difficult conversations efficiently, effectively, and without emotion to determine the truth.



Tip #3: Use your superpowers

It is incumbent on compliance professional to ensure that we are aware of factors that could derail a successful conversation. Last month, we focused on being aware of the environment and how perceptions can change during a high-stakes conversation.

This month, the focus is on ourselves. It is important to remember that the one thing we can control in any conversation is our own behavior. To that end, what happens if we find ourselves becoming defensive, angry, or even argumentative during a conversation? We need to evoke our two superpowers: curiosity and positivity.

When someone you are speaking with becomes loud, uses accusatory words or gestures, “help turn your visceral tendency to respond in kind to curiosity, look for opportunities to be curious, and stay curious. Ask yourself, ‘Why would a reasonable, rational and decent person say this?’”^[1] Or ask the individual to help you understand their rationale by providing more information regarding their thought process on the discussion topic. By engaging your brain and staying focused, you can prevent changing your spoken and unspoken communication and enhance the dialogue.

The second superpower in the realm of communication is positivity. Why positivity? Well, not all conversations will go well. There will inevitably be times where your best efforts to establish trust and create dialogue will not be met with equal enthusiasm by the other party. Instead of being discouraged and defeated, you need to remind yourself of the learning in that experience. “Don’t get bitter. Get BETTER. Find the lesson and MOVE ON.”^[2]

By learning from past experiences, we can continue to refine our conversation skills to ensure we are more successful at the next interaction. Your mindset and expectations play a crucial role in your success. Remember to “expect success and you’ll find more of it. We get more of what we focus on.”^[3] My personal experience has been that if I keep an open mind as I prepare for and initiate a high-stakes conversation, remaining focused on a successful outcome, I stand a better chance of achieving that goal.

In the next two articles, I will share two specific frameworks to use during high-stakes conversations that have emotional undertones and potential differing opinions.

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