

Harry Hoffmann

From: KenRoyer@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 02, 2012 10:55 PM
To: KenRoyer@aol.com
Subject: To our Colleagues in Personnel

January, 2012

To our Colleagues in Personnel...

1) This monthly "resource tool" is designed to provide encouragement for personnel workers in ministry-related areas. If you would like to be removed from the list (or a friend would like to be added), please let me know... kenroyer@linkcare.org or kenroyer@aol.com.

2) Link Care's Program of Restoration and Personal Growth has openings. If we may come alongside and consult (no cost) or help by providing counseling services, don't hesitate to contact us. You might check the web site, <http://www.linkcare.org/restoration>

3) We appreciate your prayers for "Building Skills for Member Care with Excellence" (Jan. 9-13, 2012). We're looking forward to an excellent conference.

4) Reminder for this month: LISTENING SKILLS are so important! We welcome the wise perspective of Steve Karum (New Tribes Mission, Member Care). As you read this, what are your thoughts? We welcome your comments / observations.

Have a good month.

Ken Royer, for your Link Care Friends

Address: 1734 W. Shaw Ave; Fresno, CA 93711

Telephone: 559 439 5920 ext. 122

kenroyer@linkcare.org; kenroyer@aol.com

Good Listening: "Three Before Me"

Steve Karum, NTM

"Three before me" is a little self-reminder, like a string tied on my finger, to stay focused on the one with whom I'm conversing by asking three important questions.

Currently our ministry is with missionaries on home assignment. We find that while all missionaries have a story to *tell*, *telling the story* is just half the experience. If "telling the story" is to be effective, the *story-teller* needs to have a good *story-listener*. Therefore the main question: How good a *story-listener* am I?

Has this ever happened to you? As the *story-teller* you're deeply engaged in relating an incident when all of a sudden, out of the blue, your story is intercepted, hijacked! Somewhere in the course of your story telling the listener grew bored and took over the conversation! It might have happened in a short millisecond in which you paused or you said a word that triggered a story or memories, or even a hobby horse the listener insisted on relating. It's hard when that happens. How do we handle it? Do we speak "*Readers Digest Condensed*" the next time we're the *story-teller*?

As much as I don't like it, how many times as a *story-listener* have I hijacked another person's story? Have I adopted the un-golden rule, "Do unto others as they have done to you?" Seeking to encourage while interacting with the *story-teller* (without hijacking their story), I aim to ask three important questions to bring perspective into a difficult story.

We recently met with a couple en route to PNG. Since they had started "Partnership Development" they had several setbacks. After I heard of these events I asked them Question #1, "*In light of this how are you and God doing?*"

Although it may seem silly to do so I like to ask this question even when everything is going well. Maybe this is a question that should come later but I ask it first because we are spiritual beings and I believe it is best to start with the most important relationship we have -- God and me. Question #1 pulls our attention to God. He knows all about our struggles and just as He knows about battles so He also knows the way through.

It is not uncommon to hear a challenge / struggle / disappointment woven through a missionary's story. The missionary may not be sufficiently aware of the struggle to put it into words but I believe it's there and it's causing them stress, emotionally, physically or spiritually. Therefore I like to ask Question #2 in a positive way, "*What strengths do you have that will help you meet this challenge?*" This question focuses on our God-given strengths. These strengths will with His direction help us overcome the problem and grow stronger. It is a question that hopefully will draw the heart toward hope.

Humans are part of a social network and missionaries have several networks: friends, relatives, churches, mission organization, the ministry country or location, local believers, and co-workers. Within some networks missionaries feel very safe to the point they will reach out for help. Therefore Question #3: "*Whom do you know who could help as you face this challenge?*" This query points them toward another who can come alongside. Suffering is a given but suffering in solitude can seem intolerable.

Of course every conversation has a life of its own. It's never the same as the previous one and that makes listening enjoyable. By utilizing these questions, each conversation will tell of one's relationship with God -- the questions, the blessing, and the challenges -- the strengths they never knew they had, and the strength they drew from the rich wisdom of their friends.

Sometimes the "three before me" doesn't seem to fit. The surroundings are important. Is it quiet? Is the topic safe to talk about publicly? How

well do we know each other? These all need to be considered. So with that in mind here is what I try in conversation with missionaries.

It all starts with their story. I realize that is so "duh," but I really believe missionaries, actually all people, feel honored through good listening. Through engaged listening the listener communicates respect, safety, and love to the missionary. Billy age 4 is quoted on the Internet, "*When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different! You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.*" I'd like every missionary to say, "I know my name is safe with Steve and Patty."