

## **Newsletter: Bringing the Inside Out**

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### **Coaching: Your Story: Old or New?**

**by David Krueger, MD (from Coaching Compass, the CTA coaching newsletter)**

**People perceive and remember what fits into their personal plot—an internal script of oneself and one's world. Beliefs and assumptions (inspired by experiences) dictate what you look for and attribute meaning. You always find or create that which validates those beliefs, and ignore, mistrust, disbelieve—or more likely don't notice—anything that doesn't fit into that pattern.**

### **Reruns**

**People repeat behaviour, even that which doesn't work, because it offers security and familiarity. Doing the same thing results in a known outcome; predictability masquerades as effectiveness. When you move beyond a familiar pattern, you may experience anxiety.**

**Repetition reinstates the security of the familiar, even if the repetition is limiting or frustrating. By opting for repetition, people sabotage invention and imprison creativity. Stuck behaviour has stuck consequences. Staying in a rut long enough begins to seem like fate. That outlook can lead to despair. The ultimate question about fixed beliefs or "stuckness" is: Does it work?**

### **Who Wrote This?**

**Change may be difficult, but it begins with the easy recognition**

**that you are the author of your own life story. Insight, understanding, and theory do not create change. New theories alone will not drive old lived experiences into extinction. Lasting change requires new lived experiences to replace old experiences – you invested a lot of years in the old system, and you will have you practice the new stuff as hard as you practiced the old stuff.**

#### **4 BASIC TESTS FOR CHANGE**

- 1. What do you want to change?**
- 2. What do you want to outgrow?**
- 3. What do you want to avoid?**
- 4. What do you want to enhance?**

#### **Assertiveness**

**All of us should insist on being treated fairly; we have to stand up for our rights without violating the rights of others. This means tactfully, justly, and effectively expressing our preferences, needs, opinions and feelings. Psychologist call that being "assertive," as distinguished from being unassertive (weak, passive, compliant, self-sacrificing) or aggressive (self-centered, inconsiderate, hostile, arrogantly demanding).**

**Because some people want to be "nice" and "not cause trouble," they "suffer in silence," "turn the other cheek," and assume nothing can be done to change their situation or "it is our cross to bear." The rest of us appreciate pleasant, accomodating people but whenever a "nice" person permits a greedy, dominant person to take advantage of him/her, the passive person is not only cheating him/herself but also reinforcing unfair, self-centered behaviour in the aggressive person.**

**The types of skills learned in assertiveness training assist people:**

- To speak up, make requests, ask for favours and generally insist that your rights be respected as a significant, equal**

- human being. To overcome the fear and self-depreciation that prevents you from doing these things.**
- **To express negative emotions (complaints, resentment, criticism, disagreement, intimidation, the desire to be left alone) and to refuse requests.**
  - **To show positive emotions (joy, pride, liking someone, attraction) and to give compliments. Accept compliments with "Thank you."**
  - **To ask why and question authority or tradition, not to rebel but to assume responsibility for asserting your share of control of the situation--and to make things better. You are no one's slave.**
  - **To initiate, carry on, change and terminate conversations comfortably. Share your feelings, opinions and experiences with others**
  - **To deal with minor irritations before your anger builds into intense resentment and explosive aggression.**

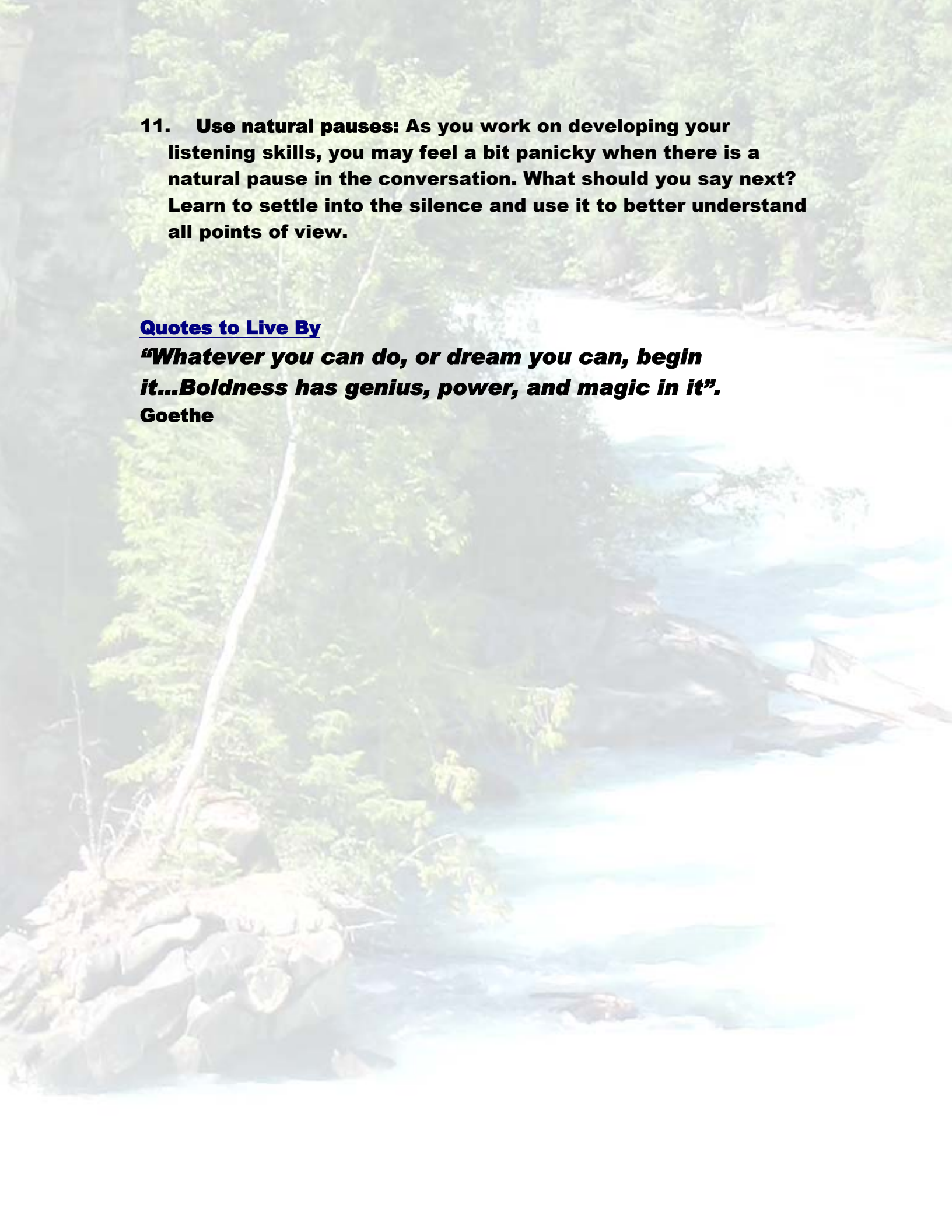
**Learning new communication skills and when to use them is an effective way of asserting yourself and breaking old patterns. Assertiveness can be an antidote to fear, shyness, passivity, and even anger.**

**It is your right to stand up for yourself and to assert your individuality. On the other hand, you don't have to be assertive all the time, in all circumstances. The goal is to be able to assert yourself, and to be free to choose.**

### **TIPS for ACTIVE LISTENING**

- 1. Face the speaker. Sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language.**
- 2. Maintain eye contact, to the degree that you all remain comfortable.**

- 3. Minimize external distractions.** Turn off the TV. Put down your book or magazine, and ask the speaker and other listeners to do the same.
- 4. Respond appropriately to show that you understand.** Murmur ("uh-huh" and "um-hmm") and nod. Raise your eyebrows. Say words such as "Really," "Interesting," as well as more direct prompts: "What did you do then?" and "What did she say?"
- 5. Focus solely on what the speaker is saying.** Try not to think about what you are going to say next. The conversation will follow a logical flow after the speaker makes her point.
- 6. Minimize internal distractions.** If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and continuously re-focus your attention on the speaker, much as you would during meditation.
- 7. Keep an open mind.** Wait until the speaker is finished before deciding that you disagree. Try not to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking.
- 8. Avoid letting the speaker know how you handled a similar situation.** Unless they specifically ask for advice, assume they just need to talk it out.
- 9. Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish to defend yourself.** The speaker will feel as though their point had been made. They won't feel the need to repeat it, and you'll know the whole argument before you respond. Research shows that, on average, we can hear four times faster than we can talk, so we have the ability to sort ideas as they come in...and be ready for more.
- 10. Engage yourself.** Ask questions for clarification, but, once again, wait until the speaker has finished. That way, you won't interrupt their train of thought. After you ask questions, paraphrase their point to make sure you didn't misunderstand. Start with: "So you're saying..."



**11. Use natural pauses:** As you work on developing your listening skills, you may feel a bit panicky when there is a natural pause in the conversation. What should you say next? Learn to settle into the silence and use it to better understand all points of view.

**Quotes to Live By**

***“Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it...Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it”.***  
**Goethe**