

## **Lesson # 18: Techniques that can produce a shift in ones' perspective:**

### **Divorced Fathers Network Advocates Of Shared Parenting 'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'**

#### **Three techniques that can produce a shift in ones' perspective\***

The first requires a change in one's physical alignment with the other person. For example: If two people are negotiating for one piece of rope, they are more apt to have a tug-of-war standing face-to-face than sitting side by side. Standing nose to nose they feel threatened; feeling afraid, they can overlook the fact that the two of them have something in common.

One way to physically align oneself with an ex-spouse is to write a problem and a possible solution on a piece of paper. Attach it to a clipboard. Let her read your suggestion. Standing side by side discuss what is written. Ask for her opinions. Write them down and discuss them. Do your brainstorming on the paper and the problem will no longer appear to be between the two of you.

Role playing also can facilitate a shift in how a person views a situation. The process is simple. With two or three friends, or in an established support group role play. Begin by instructing someone to play your part in the upcoming situation. Now adopt the role of your past mate, and play out her part using her way of expressing herself, her gestures and her voice qualities. After that part has been played out, take your own position and act as you think you should. Finish the role play by having people take on both your position and your ex-wife's.

Step back, watch, and listen to the drama as an observer. When the role playing is finished you will have a fuller understanding of the coming situation and can decide if the course of action you have in mind makes sense. Having a thorough knowledge of what one wishes to communicate, and understanding that one's tone of voice and body language matters, the speaker now prepares himself physically for the upcoming meeting. Here is a two-part system that can further enhance dialogue in a trying situation.

The second way: Cleanse the body and mind.

If a man attempts to communicate when he is feeling tense and his head is full of angry chatter it is unlikely that he will be able to see and hear enough of what the other person has to say to communicate effectively. At the same time his own body language, especially if it is signaling anger, may be interfering with the other's ability to hear what is being said.

Use physical activity to release tension and quiet the mind. Weight lifting, running,

splitting wood or hammering nails all work well. While working out, verbalize your feelings. Express what is on your mind forcefully. Express yourself thoroughly before meeting with your ex-wife, mediator or judge and you will arrive physically relaxed and mentally present.

The third way: Re-live past successes.

Remember a specific time in which you were able to call on your resources to handle a situation which was difficult or even dangerous. In recalling that earlier moment, note how you were breathing, your posture, and the quality of your movements, the sound of your voice, its rhythm and its loudness. Study this memory of yourself and all you heard and felt.

Then visualize yourself moving to your image and putting it on like a skin-tight suit. Adopt the breathing pattern, postures, movements and voice qualities, so that you feel again as you did when you successfully handled that difficult situation.

Now, imagine yourself in the upcoming meeting and visualize yourself speaking, feeling and acting as you did in the past when you mobilized your resources and succeeded. Relive those actions and sensations until you feel confident that you can again call up the resources necessary to succeed.

\*From Fathers Are Forever - A Co-Parenting Guide for the 21st Century, by Steven Ashley all rights reserved.

**Contact DFN by: phone: 831-335-5855**

**[www.DivorcedFathers.org](http://www.DivorcedFathers.org)**

**Email: [steve@divorcedfathers.org](mailto:steve@divorcedfathers.org)**