

CONTRIBUTION TRAINING

What is Contribution?

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What is Contribution?

Our Life is spent using our energy to accomplish actions. We accomplish tasks, establish relationships, work at jobs, enjoy sports and pastimes, and overcome illness. We are active even as we sleep; rebuilding and restoring our bodies.

A contribution is energy organized in a particular direction, for a specific activity.

We are born with the ability to nourish ourselves and to reach out to and nourish other people. We call this the process of contribution. The energy I possess is replenished by exchanging energy with others.

My contribution is what I do. What I talk about only has meaning if it leads to an action. I am what I accomplish, or dream of doing.

If I invest most of my energy into making contributions towards my family, then this becomes the direction and shape of my life. I develop purpose in contributing to my family. If I spend all my energy making contributions to my work, then that is the direction of my life.

I experience a sense of clarity when I can see what I am doing with my energy. I usually have choices about the contributions I choose to make, where I invest my efforts and what directions I set for myself.

Purpose of Contribution

I make contribution because I am selfish. We make a contribution because of our need to feel that we are accomplishing something in the world, that our position in the world is of some importance and that our existence has meaning. I call this enlightened selfishness. This does not exclude others. On the contrary, if I truly understand that my contributions need to have quality, meaning and depth, then of course I must care for others and for my own ideas.

We are more honest and effective when we put ourselves first, rather than when we assume our contribution comes from our so-called “dedication”. When I am honest and say that I do the work I do because I enjoy it, I come across to others as myself. When I am working from my selfishness, I come across as a whole person. When I am working from my “dedication”, I come across as patronising.

When I invest my energy into making contributions, I feel I am accomplishing something in my life. In order to achieve the contribution I am capable of making, I need to discover who I am. I need to develop an awareness of my abilities, my talents, my limitations and my emotional blocks, which have the potential to cripple me. I have to acquire a knowledge of my feelings and from where they derive.

If I become engrossed in the rhetoric of a professional role, I can lose the awareness of what I am really like as a person. I can disown the parts of myself I don't like and see those parts as failing in other people. I need to find a way to accept the parts of myself I try to disown. If we are going to continue to make contributions that are satisfying to us and useful to our society, then we must continue to explore ourselves.

The goal and purpose of making a contribution is to achieve recognition from others. However, it is not enough to receive recognition from just anyone. We need it from those people we specifically want it from, in order to feel satisfied.

We must acquire a feeling of accomplishment, through the contribution we choose to make. I am not evaluating the accomplishment. I am talking about what I feel when I accomplish. Satisfaction is not how the world judges me – it is how I feel about what I do.

Myself and Contribution

I make two types of contribution. I make contributions directly through my emotions to myself and to others. Each person's set of emotional responses and needs are totally unique and individual. Through my emotional responses to situations and others I make contributions of which I am not aware. We call this unconscious contribution. It is the part of me that I don't know, but to which other people respond.

The other type of contribution is called Conscious Contribution. This is when I contribute with parts of myself I know and of which I am fully aware. When I contribute with my knowledge, my material possessions, a conscious decision, action or risk, I am making a conscious contribution.

My conscious contribution is what I am doing.

My unconscious contribution is derived from what I am feeling.

How I feel will effect what I do, just as what I do will affect how I feel.

My emotions provide the energy for my contributions.

The only things which are significant in our lives are what we do and how we feel.

For example, many intellectual parents are not as effective with their children as they could be, because they become too involved with analysing their relationship with their children in their heads. Their children remain hungry for the straight messages contained in their parents' feelings and actions. They feel unhappy and frustrated when they only receive interpretations and explanations. The strength of parenthood in primitive societies is often the degree to which they communicate their emotions directly with their children. Children know intuitively that their reality is in what they feel and do.

I do not deny the usefulness of our thinking processes, but we need to find the right place for them. We must find a way to use our highly developed intellects, so that they add to, rather than stifle our doing and feeling selves. If my intellectual capacities are at war with my emotional capacities that will detract from the contributions I can make. If my head is co-operation will enhance the contributions I can make.

Contributions through Feeling

My emotional self is a stranger to me. That is the reason why I will go to torturous lengths, such as therapy, to find my emotional self. Each one of us lives with the most fascinating stranger we can encounter; ourselves.

As I am unaware of how many of my small mannerisms, such as picking at rugs, running my hands through my hair, function, so I am also unaware of how my emotional self is perceived and interacts with people around me.

I can become very impatient and uptight because my work might not be going very well. Often I will not be able to perceive where the tightness is coming from. I will get angry at a messy ashtray, or impatient at someone's lateness, when, in fact this emotion is coming from a very different place.... my own troubles with my work I will not be aware of how you perceive me when I am like that. Someone can say to me, "You are really uptight now; why don't you take a walk in the garden?" and I feel a shock. I feel I am talking to a stranger. I have no idea what this person is talking about to me. At the very best it takes me a moment to accept that there could be something in what she/he is saying. However even in that acceptance, I do not identify with the emotions. I accept her/his words only because I trust her/his perceptions.

We all know the pain of disowning a part of ourselves, out of anger, or fear, or bitterness, but we do not realise the effect of that pain upon other people. We don't realise the effect of that pain on ourselves and often, do not know how to free ourselves from our self-denying feelings.

The paradox of our emotional self is that other people can see it clearly. While we can confuse people about where our emotions are coming from, we cannot really hide our emotional selves from others. People experience us as hurt, or caring or bitter, or loving, or lonely, or tired, or joyful. We cannot hide these feelings, because even in trying to hide them, we will reveal ourselves. If I try to appear confident, when in fact I am scared, you will quickly identify my phoniness, even when you can't necessarily name it or know why it is there.

You will also notice when my emotions are absent. Not only is our emotional self a stranger to us, but it is also not ever completely controllable. This is not particularly surprising, if we remember that our emotional self is also our source of energy.

I am constantly contributing with my feelings and other people are noticing that contribution and either accepting or rejecting it. That contribution affects the recognition they give me. However, I must remain unconscious of this type of contribution.

Our emotional self provides many of our most important contributions to other people; our caring, our loving, our wisdom, our acceptance of others. These are the things we contribute through our feeling selves. There is a flow of emotions between people that cannot be forced. If I have to strive to love somebody, that is not going to be real love for them. In understanding how much of what we are remains a stranger to us, we can understand the paradox of how we cannot strive for happiness, or wisdom, or caring. The professional, caring smile adopted by social workers, psychologists and physicians fails because it is pushing something that cannot be pushed. Someone either cares for someone – or they don't. The person being cared for will know whether they are genuinely being cared for or not. Caring is something that you cannot make conscious. I cannot set out to be a caring person anymore than I can strive to be a wise person. If I set out to contribute to you consciously, with something I call my wisdom, I will end up being a bore. If I set out to consciously contribute to you from what I call my caring, I'll end up being patronising. I have to go with the flow of my emotions in these areas and trust my emotional self. Ultimately, I need to know my emotional self sufficiency, so I can trust it even though it is a stranger to me. The paradox is that I can learn to be loving and caring and even wise; these are talents that can be taught, just as artistic or therapeutic intuition can be developed.

There is a large package of caring, wisdom, love and ability within me. I may have that package tied up. I may have that package boxed, or stuffed away in a cupboard. I can be taught to open this box and develop my potentials.

You observe my emotional self as soon as you meet me. You can quickly pick up tiredness or enthusiasm in my voice, even if I'm trying to hide them and you can see hurt or kindness in my face regardless of whether I want you to see these qualities in me. My emotional self is clearly something from which I cannot run and at the same time it is that part of me which I cannot force. If a person tries to force the strength of their self onto someone else, they'll often be perceived as weak, un-together or un-centred. The other person will feel "Why is he pushing himself like that? Why is he coming on so strong?" Emotional strength is something that has its reality only when it is not pushed. If I can let you see my weakness, then you can perceive my strengths. If I'm trying only to let you see my strengths you see me only as weak. If I am relating to you always smiling, very cheerful and very caring of you, you will quickly begin to doubt my caring.

The nature of my emotional self is such that I can only have my caring when I can also have my cruelty. I can only have my strength when I can also have my weakness. There is a balancing, an equilibrium between being able to possess both my strengths and my weaknesses; to be able to own and use both my caring and cruelty. If I own and make use of one part of those polarities, then I will not have my wholeness as a person. Without this balance, I cannot effectively contribute to myself or to others. If I can only be caring but never cruel, I will end up being patronising. If I can be cruel and never caring I will end up hurting others and hurting myself. I need to own both the positive and the negative in me. I also need to use the negative, in such a way that I make a positive contribution to other people.
