



The Examined Life -- Speak Up -- Edition 22, July, 2006

A free, electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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Speak Up

Do you avoid or embrace conflict? I've noticed that many of my clients are conflict avoiders. There's an adage in the coaching world about coaches attracting what they themselves have worked on and continue to work on. That is true for me.

That's why I really enjoyed Tim Ursiny's book *The Coward's Guide to Conflict: Empowering Solutions for Those Who Would Rather Run than Fight*. I loved the first couple of sentences — "I hate conflict! I really do." Because Ursiny was a conflict avoider himself, he is one of the best teachers (see details about a Coward's Guide book discussion below).

The ability to embrace conflict is relative. Perhaps you're really good at being direct and clear at work but completely avoid conflict at home. Or you may see the same patterns showing up in multiple areas of your life and yet still realize that you **have** developed some skills in this area over the years.

My client Jill came to coaching after a difficult business failure. When we discussed what happened and what she'd learned from the experience, she realized that she'd ignored important signals of trouble and avoided speaking up. Developing the habit of communicating clearly and dealing with conflict was an important issue that had an impact in all areas of her life.

One day she came to our coaching call in a frustrated mood. "I did it again," she said. "There he was ranting and raving, carrying on and being an absolute jerk and I didn't say anything. I'm really tired of doing that."

For the next half-hour we looked at her beliefs, her values, her vision of herself and all of the things that kept her mired in the place of not speaking up... of being "nice." Then we looked at who she would be and what beliefs, values and behaviors she would have if she routinely communicated clearly and directly. We used an **Identity Ladder** which is based on the work of LA Reding (steppingitup.com). I've included the details of her work and a blank form for you to use in the Resources section of my website <http://exnerassociates.com/resources.htm>

We came up with an alter-ego whom she named Super Jill. Super Jill would, at a moments notice, duck into the nearest phone booth, don her super hero clothes and pop out with a direct communication style. Can you picture it? Super Jill made frequent appearances over the next few months. Not always right away. Sometimes she had to be deliberately summoned. But gradually direct communication became more automatic for Jill.

We can change the patterns that hold us back. We have to recognize them, decide what we want instead and then work consistently to make the change.

How do you handle conflict? Do you avoid it at all costs? Do you avoid it for as long as you can and then blow things out of proportion? Is your usual method working well for you? If not, what can you do to begin to change it?

Personal Update

Life has been very full these past few months. I have my first concert with Musica Nova on the last Sunday of October. If you're here in the Phoenix area and enjoy classical music, see Coming Events below for details.

I earned my Professional Certified Coach (PCC) designation from the International Coaches Federation (ICF). I'm also glad to be leading workshops again, now on Communications, Team Building and other topics. I really enjoy teaching/facilitating.

The weather is beautiful at this time of year and it's planting season. We're getting ready to put in a small xeriscape garden in place of the patch of grass in the back yard (for more info about xeriscape see <http://cals.arizona.edu/gardening/xeriscaping.html>). If it turns out well I'll be sure to post a picture or two on my website.

Coming Events

Musica Nova Orchestra Concert

Dates: Sunday 10/29/06

Location: Temple Chai

4645 E Marilyn, Phoenix, AZ 85032

Time: 3 pm AZ Time

Tickets: \$25; \$20 Student/Senior

www.musicanovaaz.org

Program: Stenhammar: Piano Concerto no.1

(Janice Weber, piano)

Atterberg: Symphony no.3

(I play bass in the orchestra)

***The Coward's Guide to Conflict* Virtual Book Discussion**

(book by Tim Ursiny, available at Amazon [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) for @ \$12)

Dates: Wednesdays beg. 11/1, every other week for 4 sessions

Time: 4:30-5:30 pm AZ/MST, 6:30-7:30 pm EST

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$125; Early bird price \$85 by 10/20

Author Tim Ursiny describes himself as a conflict-hater. Since he's learned how to deal with conflict effectively, he's perfect person to help you learn how to:

- Assess your communication style
- Consider new ways of communicating
- Improve relationships
- Use methods of assertive communication
- Choose from among options rather than operate by habit

To sign up, please use this [online form](#), or contact me via email: info@exnerassociates.com or phone: 602-298-1129

Solopreneur Coaching Group

A solopreneur is a one-person business. Coaches, consultants, therapists, organizers, massage therapists, writers are a few examples. Here are a few of the challenges solopreneurs may face:

- Little to no outside accountability
- Inconsistent focus on marketing, networking, follow up and continuing education
- Isolation, loneliness, lack of a sounding board
- Lack of work/life balance
- Feeling overwhelmed and scattered
- Unsteady revenue stream

Does this sound familiar to you? If so, consider joining us.

When: Starting Wednesdays November 1, 8-9 am AZ/MST, 10-11 am EST (every other week; dates and times may be adjusted to meet needs of the group)

Introductory Rate: \$150 per month with a 3-month commitment; Bring a Friend Discount price is \$100 per month each for you and the friend

Enjoy the support of a group of 4 to 8 non-competing solopreneurs and your coach. We will meet by phone twice a month to:

- Assess your business strengths and challenges
- Clarify your picture of success
- Brainstorm and develop creative solutions
- Identify your goals
- Provide accountability
- Assess results
- Provide support and encouragement

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Group Coaching based on *Now What? 90 Days to a New Life Direction*

Dates: Mondays beg 12/4, first 3 weeks per month for 4 months; dates and times may be adjusted to meet needs of the group)

Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time/MST, 6-7 pm EST

Introductory Rate: \$200/month for 4 months, book by Laura Berman Fortgang and workbook included; Bring a Friend discount price \$150/ month each

Maximum: 8 participants

This program includes two individual coaching sessions, 3 group calls/month for 4 months, a book and workbook. It can help you get clear about what's next in your life, especially if you are:

- Re-entering the work world or seeking more satisfying work
- Considering your options after a major life transition
- Looking for fulfillment and meaning

- Wanting to discover what's next for you

The work between calls involves reading a chapter or two from the *Now What* book and completing exercises designed to uncover limiting beliefs, wisdom from your past and direction for your future. The individual coaching calls will help you to personalize the information and create your action plan.

any of my clients come to me because they want to increase their satisfaction with their work - they want to transition to a different career, their job has ended and they need to find new work, they want to start their own business, they want their current business to stop running their entire lives or they may be in a life transition that has them thinking about what's next (i.e., the kids have grown, they want to partially retire, etc).

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. I work primarily with people in career transition and with self-directed individuals and business owners who want to maximize their effectiveness and satisfaction at work while maintaining a healthy life/work balance. Curious? Email me at DEXner@ExnerAssociates.com or call 602-298-1129 to schedule a complimentary 45-minute coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues! Or direct them to the subscription form and past issues at <http://exnerassociates.com/newsletter.htm>

Thanks,

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Words have the power to both destroy and heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.

- Buddha