

Book review on practical of petersen text

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Summary

Petersen, J. (2007). *Why don't we listen better?: Communicating & connecting in relationships*. Tigard, OR: Petersen Publications.

The text by Petersen was published in 2007, describing relationships and how one can relate in those relationships. Petersen strives to demonstrate effective communication by saying that one should not allow their emotions to rule what is being communicated. He also mentions incidents that made him come up with the theory 'the flat-brain theory of emotions'. The literature provides a line graphic drawing of an individual, illustrating and differentiating emotional reaction in people. Petersen clarifies that the origin of reactions originates from one or more areas of the body for example, the stomach. The book reveals that there are two levels of communication: one that gives and receives information and goes ahead to discuss a point or points of view. The second level of communication goes deeper than words and moves the communicating individuals towards satisfying relationships. Petersen also talks about the talker-listener card and he addresses how level two communications should take place. He tells those that take part in the conversation that the card can be placed between the "talker" and also the "listener" and in both cases Petersen provides them with the relevant rules of effective communication with the listener saying "I am calm enough to hear I don't own the problem" and the talker saying "I am most bothered I own the problem."

Persons operating on level one communication are usually not able to connect the three areas necessary for effective communication as opposed to those operating in level two. This is because those in level two are able to

establish deeper relations with their counterparts through communication. The author of the text explains his flat brain theory and illustrates what happens in one area that is mostly used in communication more than others. Careful analysis of Petersen text reveals that the flat-brain theory was developed by identifying communication problems. Petersen work is supported by a careful illustration of common communication errors. The aspect of listening is also discussed from the perspective common mistakes in addition to guidance on how to make good use of the talker-listener card. The reader is informed on the different ways of establishing connections between different parts of the body that is head, heart and stomach. Effective communication in a group setting is also explained in addition to the necessities of making decisions together. The discussions lead to the conclusion that genuineness, empathy and effective communication will enable us to grow and establish deeper connections with other people making our lives and the environment we live in better. Petersen provides practical groundwork that enable us better handle emotional loaded situations as we communicate. We come to the realization that communication works and nobody should be left out in grasping the concept. Communication is important for professionals as well as the general public. The reader is taken on a journey to realize that listening takes more than just hearing.

Response

Reading Petersen's text triggered memories whereby I had difficulties communicating with others in an effective way. Back in high school, I frequently got punished for my habit of talking without listening. According

to Petersen, " Listening first earns us the right to speak and be heard". If only I knew and put Petersen's into practice, I would have avoided all the punishments I received from my teacher. Furthermore, I realized that it was my right to be heard whenever I had something important to put across. In instances where people were not willing to listen to me, I now know it is my right and only fair to ask to be heard because it is one of the strategies to establishing effective communication. Reading this literature also brought to my attention how I let my emotions rule my communication citing an incident when a friend hurt my feelings by mentioning about unhappy moments in my family. My motions took over me and we ended up fighting yet it was a simple matter that could have been resolved through effective communication. Lastly, I agree with Petersen's idea that understating is another key issue in listening leading to effective communication. For example, if someone has a constant disagreement with their counterpart on several life and professional issues, there will be no effective communication between the two of them since they will both be struggling to convey a given message that they deem right without taking into consideration what the other is putting across.

Reflection

Reading Petersen's text made me reflect on the several points he put across. Petersen mentions that some people do not have the temperament to be listeners. Their own thoughts and feelings make so much internal noise hence clouding their mind such that they can't hear anyone else. This made me remember my younger brother who always wants to speak and not listen to what he is being told to do or other people's opinion. It is also true that

people's everyday experiences lead to manifestation of different emotions such as happiness, pain, joy and hurt. Petersen mentions that these lumps of hurt feelings lead to confusion in our emotion container and don't leave much room for current stomach activities. At this point, I am reminded that I should not let my emotions rule my conversations because things might get out of hand. This insight on communication reminded me of my younger years when my parents were engaged in a war of words and they would let emotions take control of their conversation and they ended hurting each other.

The talker-listener card aspect addressed by Petersen also shows us that level two communications should be the one that every person applies in their daily lives as it entails understanding one another to have effective communication. No individual can survive alone, we need each other and in order to understand each other, we need effective communication. The essence of this book is to enable us act on behalf of each other by listening and engaging in depth conversation with each other. This made me reflect on the saying that says "tit for tat is a fair game" that also applies to listening and speaking. This leads to the scenario whereby for one to listen to you, you must be ready to listen to them too. This in true sense will promote effective communication leading to harmony with one another. The flat brain theory on the other hand can also be used to explain why many marriages cannot be resolved as the companion is not able to 'stomach' the other person opinions and emotions. This illustration clearly leads to the conclusion that effective communication is vital in the improvement of relationships.

Action

Like any other piece of literature Petersen wrote his book with the hope of bringing transformation into the human society. Personally, I would first incorporate empathy during my conversations as this will create clear understanding between me and the people am relating with. I also believe that empathy would help connect with my counterparts more citing historical data in my life whereby people who do not show empathy to others do not have good relationships with many people who they relate with in their daily lives. I will also apply the TLC when communicating with people as this will show people around me that I require them to listen to what I am saying and that I would also listen to them so as to improve our relationships and create more understanding between us. The TLC method can also be applied in couple therapy sessions to help couples engage in effective communication. I would recommend it to the people I interact with often, my colleagues, friends and family, in order to promote effective communication in the whole society since by doing so I will be preparing the current and next generation for what they are expected to know during communication.

I will also apply the four goals of communication: reducing emotional disturbance, clarify thinking, increase self-confidence and build supportive friendship in ensuring that I effectively converse with those around me. This means I would reduce emotional disturbance by thinking things through before acting upon the words I intend to say. I would clarify thinking by simply thinking things through again and again. I would increase self-confidence by believing in myself more and standing firm with my decisions. I would let others know that I would only listen to them if they also agree to

listen to what I have to say. I would build more supportive friendship by treating others with respect and listening to what they have to say. This would lead to the creation of good understanding amongst friends this will also in turn make me find new friends.

I also believing that owning the book would be a great strategy for me so as to make references whenever I need to confirm something, and by doing so I would be improving my relationship with everyone I get to interact with in my daily life experiences. I would also get more copies of the book and distribute to those who have not had the chance to read the book , I believe this would change many people's communication skills as now they will be equipped with the right skill. I will also use the knowledge I have on the two levels of communication to my advantage. First, I would use level one conversation to discourage those engaging in it and by doing so I would introduce level two communication to them and this will act as a guide to making them exhibit effective communication skills leading to better their relationships. I also believe that by taking the role of the talker I would prove that I am worth listening to. This would help me not waste time with those who are unwilling to listen to what I have to say implying that I would in turn means not seek to be in a relationship with them. Taking the role of a talker would also help me form strong bonds with others. I would also recommend the book to councillors because the book helps give tips in building strong healthy relationships.

References

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