

Practical book review

Literature



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GUIDELINES FOR THE Practical Book Review By [Your Name] Student ID: [type ID w/out brackets] Presented to [Dr. Professor's Name] In partial fulfillment of the requirements of Introduction to Pastoral Counseling PACO 500 Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary Lynchburg, VA PRACTICAL BOOK REVIEW [ONE]: [AUTHOR'S LAST NAME] My Summation Communication is a tremendously important part of the human experience. Any effort to improve one's skills is valuable. Most people think they listen well when having a conversation, but the reality is that most people walk away from a conversation feeling unheard, misunderstood, and disconnected.

Petersen uses real world experiences to teach the reader how to handle difficult situations and people. In Petersen's concept, improvement in listening skills will result in an overall improvement in relationships. Peterson describes the flat brain syndrome in his book. Stomach functions consist of people's emotions or feelings – those inner nudges that let people know when they're uncomfortable, happy, excited, interested, attracted, irritable, angry, resentful, frustrated, and curious. Feelings are people's internal responses to the world around them, to what they're thinking, and to their bodies.

Heart functions give and receive concerns, suggestions, and support. They are ready to consider many options and possibilities. Healthy hearts recognize that people don't possess "the whole truth," but are confident both in owning their views and remaining open to the views of others. The head functions incorporate thinking, planning, remembering, reviewing, deciding, and rationalizing. Petersen points out that a correct understanding

of these relationships can make the difference when it comes to lessening conflicts.

A unbalanced blend of either too much brain or too much stomach creates flat-brained syndrome where it is all emotion and no thought, or the flat-brain tango, all thought with no emotion. The Talker-Listener Process is the key to creating an environment where two or more people can talk and listen to each other. This promotes a healthy communication atmosphere. The Talker Listener Card, (TLC), can help those who want to improve their ability to interact with others and communicate better. This is especially true for the listening aspect of the relationship.

Peterson explains that if we would all go back to our kid-learned skill of taking turns, communication, or speaking vs. listening, would be better achieved. We should focus on listening to one person's point of view at one time to establish feeling heard, feeling safe, and feeling understood. This will also directly lead to feeling more of a human connection and thus broadening our relationships with others. The TLC helps this process because it allows for each person (the talker and listener) to roll play while having the conversation. Each has a part to play and responsibilities to take on.

The TLC simply states these roles to help remind one what to do. Peterson moves on to explain the way people communicate, especially when asking questions. He refers to this process as similar to being in a courtroom. The way people ask questions makes a huge difference in the outcomes of the questions. People tend to ask questions in a way that sort of guides ones thinking when answering instead of just getting to the point and saying what

one really feels. If people would just come out and say what they are feeling, relationships would be better off according to Peterson.

Peterson continues to outline several listening techniques. The art of listening has to be practiced in order to succeed. One must first provide a safe place or environment for the talker in order to promote peace and safety. After this is established, the goal is to really listen and understand what the talker is trying to say. Also, clarifying the problem for the talker is very important in order to fully comprehend the situation and how to effectively listen and respond to the talker. In the final process, Petersen puts it all together to examples how to use the process of talking and listening effectively.

He gives examples of how to use his theory of “ Flat Brained Syndrome” to overcome issues and people with the syndrome. In the end, he shows you how to become a person that good things happen to due to having great communication skills. My Reflection My Investigation My Application The most crucial element after reading this book is the practical application that one would start to incorporate into their life. I have learned now that I am more committed to becoming an actual listener instead of being a talker. Too often am I getting caught up in the notion that my ideas are somehow more important than those that I am listening to.

Peterson said, “ Listen first (and longer) and then, talk second” (125). Peterson has given me methods of becoming a better listener, which in turn will enrich my relationships with people. I will use the skills that are outlined in chapter eighteen to improve the way I listen. I will do this process slowly in order to ensure a more successful outcome by starting with one or two skills

first and then moving onto another skill once the preceding skill was mastered. As a future minister, the ability to really listen is going to be a crucial aspect.

One important skill that I need to incorporate first is my ability to repeat accurately what the speaker is trying to say. I have a tendency to take what others say and rephrase it while putting my own twist on it. Peterson says that this is common. In giving feedback, listeners routinely alter the content of what other people say (Peterson 2007). I did not realize how important this is to the listener until Peterson pointed it out. The point is that most people do not seek advice to solve a problem. Most people have the ability to solve problems on their own but need a sounding board to bounce thoughts off of when finding a solution.

In order to successfully help people as a minister, I must work on my communication skills from here on out. I will improve on being more direct with my words and thoughts so that the talking time that I do have will be more goal oriented and satisfying. I will also learn how to become a better listener. Listening to people and their feelings or thoughts is one of my main concerns when it comes to giving people the proper soul care they deserve from a minister. Peterson's book has only helped me discover ways to put this into practice. References