

TLP Five-Minute Read Over Coffee – The challenge to blocking language



The impact of blocking language and its ability to make you feel small!

→ We have all had this feeling of being 'stupid and small' - a mechanic is speaking about your car, an IT professional is explaining an issue with your computer - a Doctor is talking through next steps with a medical issue.

→ The feeling stems from the simple fact you don't fully understand what has been said.

➡ That is ok in itself. Why would you? - You are talking to a specialist with much more expertise than you in their own subject area. It is your secondary reaction that can be really damaging. You want to understand but you don't say anything. Instead you might even pretend to half understand or simply nod your head in meek acceptance.

➡ You are left with a feeling of being disempowered, in the dark and anxious.

➡ It also represents a failure of communication (from both parties) which goes against everything I look to work for in the professional workshops I deliver. The founding principle of my work is that powerful communication is both simple and generous to your audience.

What does that principle look like?

💡 If I take the scenario of going to the Doctor - it means that my Doctor strives to help me understand what is going on- in language that I can access. It also means that I have the courage to ask questions, however simple they might sound.

💡 I use the word 'strive' because sharing expertise will often be imperfect. My wife is a cardiologist and I get that she does not have the time, in a 20 minute consultation, to give a detailed lecture on how the heart functions. I also get there are emergency situations when she needs to act first before providing a detailed explanation of what just happened.

💡 However, too often, expertise, encourages a type of power play. I know about this, you don't - so simply do what I say.

💡 I work with lots of professionals in Luxembourg, in sectors such as finance, law and compliance, and I present them with the same respectful challenge I would present to my Doctor - 'I really appreciate your expertise here but help me understand what that means in language that makes sense to me.'

To find out more about my business communication workshops - contact me toby@tlp.lu. Have a great end to the week.

Toby
