

LAWS OF COMMUNICATION – PART 2

The Second Law of Communication

The second law of communication is: **The way people learn determines how you teach.** It's not enough to decide that you'll teach the way **you** learn or the way that's most comfortable to **you**. In order to be an effective teacher, you must first discover what the best way is for your students to learn. Once you do that, it's important to understand that the teacher's main role is to be the student's motivator and encourager so that he can take what he's learning and be inspired to put it into practice. This makes the learner an investigator, a discoverer, and a doer. Great teachers aren't concerned with what they're teaching but with what their students are doing. Because if a teacher can't get a student to do what he's learning, then the teacher isn't really teaching and the learner isn't really learning. If "faith without works is dead," then teaching without doing is also dead.



According to psychologist Abraham Maslow, there are *four levels of learning*. The first is **unconscious incompetence**. At this level, the person is ignorant and doesn't even know it. The

second level is *conscious incompetence*. This is where the individual understands that he doesn't know something. This normally comes through some sort of new information that was presented to him in a way he could absorb. The third level is *conscious competence*, where the individual has learned something. The information is new and he is conscious of that. Finally, the last level is unconscious competence. This is where the individual knows the information so well it becomes automatic for him, like a person who's been driving for twenty years. They don't think about it anymore, they just do it.

So how do pastors, teachers, and parents get those they're teaching to the fourth level? **Resistance**. Resistance is absolutely critical to the learning process. Until the learner is challenged to think beyond where they currently are, there can be no movement toward learning something different than what they already know. The art is in knowing how much resistance is needed for each person. Too much will create anxiety and frustration. Too little will result in apathy.

The Creator understands this concept all too well as He is the ultimate Teacher. Whether we know it or not, when we become a child of His, we also become His student. And if we are His student then we must learn from our Teacher. Some show up to class with a heart willing to learn and others, unfortunately, have to learn the hard way...through **"resistance."**

I read something once that said that we can come closer to the Creator either by prayer or by pain; it's our choice. In other words, we can either learn from our Teacher by pursuing Him through prayer, or we can learn through the painful process of Him trying to get our attention by very intentionally disturbing our equilibrium. Most of us require Him to do drastic things to get our attention. Sometimes that comes by Him allowing us to make mistakes that He doesn't bail us out of, by allowing our enemies to overtake us temporarily, or by sanctioning some other trial just so we'll stop in our tracks and pursue Him. It is through this "resistance" that we don't just learn His Word, we LEARN His Word...we live it. We **"do"** what the Teacher is teaching.

In almost every circle, resistance and tension are taught as negatives, but in God's culture, tension is the very instrument for learning. For instance, if at a board meeting there are two members who strongly disagree with one another, others will feel the tension in the room. Instead of looking at it as a negative experience, we should look at it as an opportunity to understand where the other person is coming from. Backing up and asking each person what they agree on and what's important to them is a great way to find out what the real issues are behind what appears to be the issue. Most of the time in relationships, the *real issue* causing the tension is not what appears to be the problem on the surface. Oftentimes there is something much deeper that needs to be brought out. And it is this resistance that will move a person, a student, from their current understanding to consider a new position. This can only happen when the one in the teaching position conveys that they're willing to be the student, as well.

When we take the time to really understand who our learners are and how they learn, we can then tailor our message to each individual or group. When we do so in humility, always taking the position that we, too, are learners, it makes it much easier for the learner to absorb a new position that he might otherwise have rejected.

In the next part, we will talk about how important it is for learners to be part of the actual teaching process through activity and involvement. We'll also talk about how important it is for parents and teachers to shape the heart, not just the mind.

Shalom!

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