



Pause With Purpose

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...to refresh

...to grow

Hearts And Ears

Years ago, parents playfully taught young children parts of the body using a rhythmic, progressive song about bones. "The foot bone's connected to the ... ankle bone. The ankle bone's connected to the ... shin bone. The shin bone's connected to the ... knee bone." And so on, and so on. It was a fun song that taught not only the name of body parts, but also the relationship between them.

One connection that wasn't mentioned, however, is the connection that exists between the heart and the ear. Really! Such a connection exists! It isn't necessarily a physical connection, but without a doubt, the emotional condition of our heart affects how well we hear and then, in turn, how we act.

Interestingly, maladies of the emotional heart ('e-heart') bear a striking resemblance to those of its physical counterpart. Consider, for example, hardening of the arteries. When we have hardening of the arteries, the flow of blood to our heart is restricted, and in severe cases, cut off. Likewise, when we have a hardening of our e-heart, nothing gets into it. What people say, what they share, what they ask for simply bounces off our hard heart as if our ears never heard it.

Then there is the e-heart with a leaky

valve. Input from our ears gets into our heart, but then somehow it seems to get lost. It "leaks out" without making much of an impact. We listen, we hear, we give lip service to what has been shared with us. But ultimately, what our ear sends to our heart has no influence on what we choose to be or do.

In contrast, the enlarged e-heart functions much like a filterless vacuum. It takes in whatever the ear sends its way. However, lacking a filter, it has a difficult time prioritizing, structuring, and limiting the input. As a result, it takes in too much, desires to please and do too much for too many people, and in the process becomes worn out and inefficient. The admirable "big heart" becomes a liability when it goes to this extreme.

The e-heart that experiences congestive e-heart failure likewise has a strong, receptive connection to the ear. It hears and receives everything like the enlarged e-heart, but instead of being spurred on to excessive caretaking action, it freezes into immobility. All the input produces pressure on the e-heart, squeezing it from all directions. The e-heart becomes overwhelmed, unable to process or benefit from what the ear hears, and tightens into a withdrawn position of simple survival.

So what does a healthy e-heart look like? Not surprisingly, it's much like a healthy physical heart. It's open enough to receive the flow of information coming to it, strong enough to be flexible in response to it, and efficient enough to make use of it in the most productive way. It values what it hears, but has boundaries that both limit and direct what it takes in. And it's on duty 24/7 - receiving, processing, and responding in a reliable way that creates an atmosphere of safety, trust, and confidence.

Why is this important? In a world often accused of losing its heart, perhaps we may discover that our heart still exists, though it may be limited by dis-ease. The good news is that we have the choice to leave things as they are, or to actively take steps to heal our heart. Page 2 offers some suggestions for strengthening our e-heart in the hope that as we become more e-heart healthy, we will not only be better hearers of each other's words, but ultimately better spouses, parents, friends, bosses, leaders, colleagues, and so on.

What a great opportunity to improve our relationships and our world, one heart at a time!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

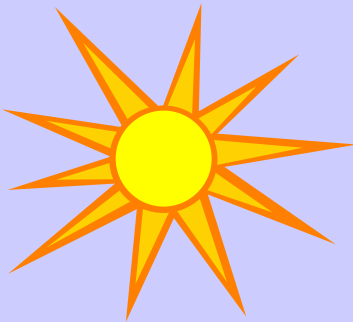
Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to design, enact, and maintain healthy life change.

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Steps Toward a Healthy E-Heart

Each journey is simply an accumulation of our steps in a certain direction. So it is with growth, relationships, and even improving the health of our emotional heart.

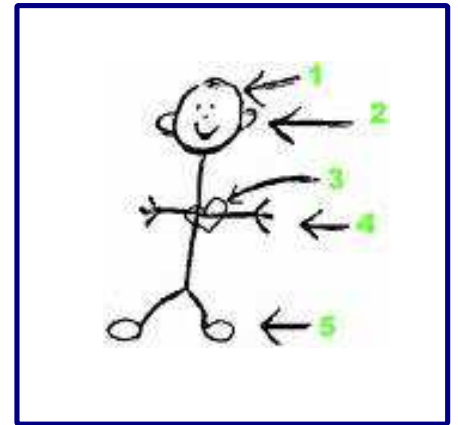
Here are a few (yet only a few) suggestions for improving our e-heart, our hearing, and our connections with others.

1) Dare and decide to be part of something bigger than our self, while maintaining a firm grip on who and what we are. Commit to community; see the value in others.

2) Focus to listen. Listen to hear (and hopefully understand), not to react. Attention is mandatory. Agreement is optional. Speaking is secondary.

3) Rediscover, or at least review, our values, for they will provide the boundaries and filters needed to process and ultimately respond to what we hear.

4) Be humbly open to growth (in perspective, in courage, in understanding, or wherever), while never losing respect for who we are today.



"Well-being is attained little by little, and is no little thing itself"

-Zeno of Citium