

VOICE

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NEWSLETTER OF THE
ICF MUMBAI CHARTER CHAPTER

COVER POINT

The Way We Speak (and Listen) is Failing Us

By Chintan Doshi

"The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply" — Steven R. Covey.

At home, my 9-year-old once told me a joke. I nodded and muttered "Nice," while replying to emails. He stared at me and said, "Dad, you're hearing, not listening." Oof. Truth bomb from a fourth grader.

At work, my team once left a one-hour strategy meeting with five different interpretations of what the goal was. Why? Because everyone talked, no one clarified, and we ran out of time to actually... understand each other. We live in an age of half-heard words and full-screen distractions. We multitask through meetings and parent with one AirPods in. We communicate non-stop, but connect like Bluetooth on 2% battery — erratic and frustrating. And in that static, something precious is fading: the quiet strength of listening. Whether at dinner tables or boardrooms, we're in constant dialogue — yet rarely on the same page.

We say words, but miss their meaning. We speak, but few feel truly heard. And the high-stakes conversations — conflict, feedback, emotion — often get postponed,

sugar-coated, or skipped entirely. This isn't about being bad communicators. It's about never being taught the grammar of conversation. We learn how to pitch, present, and persuade — but not how to listen when it matters most. We default to instinct instead of intention. And instinct gets easily overwhelmed.

Five Common Conversation Pitfalls

(And where I've seen them blow up)

1. No Contracting — Like starting a meeting with "We need to talk" and offering zero context. Instant defensiveness.
2. Missing Clarity — Ever joined a chat thinking it's a brainstorm, but it's actually a surprise performance review? Ouch.
3. Emotional Avoidance — Skipping feelings is like skipping foreplay — technically functional, deeply unsatisfying.
4. No Ownership — A team agrees on action items... that vanish into the ether by morning.
5. One-Off Syndrome — We treat deep talks like solar eclipses — rare, dramatic, and never followed up.

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A Pause Between Two Chapters

Reflecting on Completion, Connection and Renewal

By Naval Dey

The Gift of Transition

Every community has its moments of pause — gentle invitations to look back with gratitude and forward with curiosity. These are not endings, but transitions — graceful handovers to what comes next. In coaching, such pauses hold deep meaning. They remind us that every completion carries the seed of renewal. What we celebrate, release, or carry forward becomes part of a larger unfolding story — one that continues to evolve through every conversation we nurture.

Imagine a sunrise meeting the last shimmer of night — not a goodbye, but a quiet merging of what was and what will be.

Presence Over Position

True leadership in a coaching space isn't anchored in titles — it's rooted in presence. It lives in how we listen, invite reflection, and make room for others to grow.

Communities thrive when:

- curiosity leads the way,
- differences spark learning, and
- purpose remains larger than any one individual.

That's where the true spirit of coaching shines — in presence, not position.

A circle of voices, each one adding depth, not dominance.

A Question to Hold

"What needs to conclude gracefully so that something new can emerge?"

A question we often ask our clients — and, at times,



ourselves.

Holding Space for Renewal

When one phase completes, it opens the space for new voices and fresh perspectives. Each contribution — a conversation, an idea, a moment of silence — strengthens the collective.

Transitions remind us that legacies aren't defined by duration, but by impact. To step aside with gratitude is to make space for others to step forward with courage.

Leaves falling not as loss, but as nourishment for the soil of what's next.

The Ongoing Conversation

Coaching communities — like the practice itself — are alive, evolving, and ever curious. As one chapter closes, another quietly begins, infused with new energy, fresh questions, and the same enduring purpose.

Here's to honoring what was, embracing what's next, and continuing the timeless rhythm of coaching — listening deeply, asking curiously, & growing together.

Closing Reflection

Transitions invite both reflection and renewal. As we move ahead, may we carry forward gratitude for what has been and openness to what's emerging.

"In every ending lies a beginning — if only we pause long enough to notice it" ■

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But When It Works — Oh, It Works

A manager opens space for honest feedback. A spouse finally says what's beneath the surface. A teenager feels heard and stops slamming doors.

The shift isn't what was said — it's how and why. Listening is relationship glue. Think of your first love — wasn't it magical because someone really listened? Not just to your words, but the silence between them.

So next time, before replying — pause. Breathe. And listen like it's love again.

Because how we listen changes everything ■

How Coaching Helps Me as a Parent

By Subhayu Bagchi



The parenting job (and it is a full-time job; more on this on some other day) is an emotional roller coaster! One can experience the depths of despair and the pinnacle of pride, hair-tearing frustration and chest-swelling happiness, gut-wrenching fear and smug over-confidence, and many more equally bewildering combinations. Sometimes the contrasts are experienced within moments of each other, and sometimes they are played out over days, weeks and months. Parenting is not a job for the faint-hearted! From a personal perspective, **I frequently fall back on some of the principles that we learn in our journey as coaches to help me navigate these situations. As our children grow, so do we need to grow as parents.**

Active Listening Without Judging

Not just what is being said. How is it being said, what is not being said, what are the words being used, what are expressions, what is the rest of the body saying, the way we completely immerse ourselves in the narrative of our client, if we are able to immerse ourselves in these crucial conversations with our children, it develops the conversation and makes the solutioning easier. It helps the child (who may very well be an adult or a teen) feel safe and feel "heard".

Visioning

Getting to the root of what they are trying to achieve in a situation can be tricky. We evaluate everything being expressed, through our own filters and biases, despite best efforts to not do it, as that is how we are wired.

It really helps if we can "get" the end state that the person before us is seeking. Getting them to describe, getting them to detail, helps us and helps them in nailing it down to specifics and thereby moving forward towards specific actionables or plans rather than vague demands and wants.

Reflection & Science

This is perhaps underrated as a tool for parents, however if done sensitively and with empathy can unlock a sticky conversation and build perspective. It helps build bridges and our children feel that they are being taken seriously, and the parent is not merely spewing out platitudes. A thoughtful pause can do wonders where spoken words struggle and playing back their own words, encouragingly, helps them see things from a different point of view. This builds their own thinking as they are developing it on their own and we are merely walking with them on this path.

In summary

The above observations are merely my experience, and it may help other parents, but like most things in life, it's not a guarantee! Every child is unique, and every parent is on their own special journey. One feels, however, that travelling together on a co-created path is perhaps more conducive to progress compared to a journey where the paths are different and the goals are unclear. A coaching mindset helps in the creation of a collaborative and aligned path that makes this journey a joy ■

Insight as Action in Coaching

By Neha Gupta

In my years of coaching, one of the most interesting discoveries I have made is how often, in a deep session, insight itself is action. We often define action in tangible terms - things to do, plans to make, results to achieve.. Yet, in the deeper terrain of discovery, when a client touches a core pattern or encounters a truth about their inner landscape, what unfolds is subtler and more profound. Sometimes, there is nothing to do immediately. Awareness itself has started the process of change. Behaviour and choices evolve, not through deliberate effort, but because something in the client's perception has realigned. As coaches, it helps to pause and re-examine what words like action, change or outcome truly mean to us; to explore our concept of these themes, a time of sharpening our saw by becoming aware of our own stories and needs behind these words.

When a meaningful shift has occurred, our role may not always be to push toward doing, but to stay with the being. An action can be, allowing space for reflection, staying present to a new realization or letting a fresh awareness settle into the body. At such moments, our work is to help the client clarify the insight, explore what it opens up for them and gently ask what support they might need to process and integrate it. The most



powerful movement is internal - a shift in perception, a new lens through which life is seen, opening of a door which was shut and out of awareness. **We need to trust that awareness, once born, has its own intelligence to lead the way. Change rooted in awareness sustains itself; change driven by urgency may wash away.**

In psychological terms, this is the beginning of internal reorganization - where awareness starts to rewire response. Insight, then, is not the absence of action. It is action - alive, organic and deeply transformative. ■

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~ Marshall Goldsmith”

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