

Power & Presence

Summer/Fall 2005

Ideas and inspiration on conflict, communication and creating the life you want

Nothing More Than Feelings – By Judy Ringer

“How are you Inventing Your Life Today?” – the lead story from my last issue of *Power & Presence* – drew comments from several readers. Most of the comments went something like: “I wish I could have the degree of control over my life that you apparently do.”

I want to say, I wish I had the degree of control over my life that it apparently looks like I have.

Earlier this summer, several of my 20-something neighbors who live in the apartments next door had a long and lively conversation in their back yard, which lies just beneath our bedroom window – wide open on this particular warmish night. The conversation included beverages of one type or another (I hazarded some guesses), the containers for which, when drained, got thrown (loudly) into a recycle container. These antics took place between 2:30 and 3:30 A.M.

I debated for a while whether I should get up, dress, go next door, and have a conversation of my own. After tossing and turning for about 15 minutes, I decided to communicate through my open window. I got up, and – I believe in a fairly centered way – called out: “Quiet, please.” They heard me, I think, since their voices quieted a bit. And while the cans continued to go into the recycles, they did so with perhaps a bit less energy.

But the damage was done, the horse out of the barn. What were my chances of getting back to sleep? I tossed and turned for another half-hour but couldn't find my way back. I got up, walked the house, muttered oaths to myself, and finally began to notice light dawning and birds chirping around 4:45. I lay down again and dozed intermittently between 5 and 8, and eventually got out of bed to face the day, tired, depleted, and angry.

I remembered my story about “Inventing Your Life,” and its theme about the meta-communicator being the padding between my feelings and me. There wasn't much padding after a sleepless night. I talked to my husband. I honored my feelings. I even appreciated my neighbors' cluelessness. I mean they're young adults having a summer outdoor party. Okay, it IS the middle of the night, but I may have done similar stuff at that age. But in spite of my best efforts at reclaiming equanimity, I mostly gave myself a pretty hard time about the fact that I'd written that story. Here I was having FEELINGS. I can help others better manage their emotions, so why couldn't I manage my own? Why couldn't I make them go away?

I re-read my story. It helped. I didn't say I wasn't

supposed to HAVE feelings, I said I was supposed to be able to be aware enough to notice them and ride their waves. I said I wanted to make behavior choices based on my better instincts instead of acting out the emotion in unconstructive ways. I guessed that I had done that with my partying neighbors. I hadn't been mean-spirited or behaved reactively.

“Beyond That”

Then I understood that I wasn't upset with my neighbors any more; I was mad at myself for having such strong feelings. Like somehow I was supposed to be “beyond that.” Because I teach and write about centering, I should be above these tiresome emotions.

In those moments of upset, I comprehended experientially that centering doesn't take emotions away. On the mat of life, as in aikido, the attack will come. It may come from the outside (my noisy neighbors) or the inside (strong feelings). How will I manage the energy? Will I

freeze, fight, fall over, or move in toward the energy and use it wisely? I can be centered *and* upset. I hope, in fact, I *am* centered when I'm upset. When I'm centered I will hold the emotional energy differently.

In time, as they always do, the feelings died down and transformed, much like the thunderstorm that also passed through that night. By afternoon I was on the actual aikido mat and back to feelings I enjoy having in my body. “Inventing Your Life” is pretty accurate. The option to have or not have feelings is not under my control (at least not yet). The ones I had that night and early morning were not pleasant or wanted, and I could not MAKE them go away. All I could do was sit with them, watch them move through body, mind, and spirit, talk about them to caring friends, and care for myself while I was having them.

Soon I will be laughing about that night. (I already am.) And soon I will have a longer conversation with my neighbors – in the daylight, when we're all centered, open to dialogue, and able to talk about how we want to live next door to one another.

Center ≠ an absence of emotion. Center = presence with emotion. I am not a bad person because I have strong feelings. Feelings just are; they can in fact control us, or with some watching, waiting and positive intention, we can engage and direct their energy with awareness and purpose.

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inspiration



The Guest-House

This being human is a guest-house
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame,
the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

*From: Say I Am You,
poems of Rumi
Translated by*

John Moyne and Coleman Barks

**Conflict Management
Communication Skills
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Judy Ringer



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real life



September in the Rockies with Thomas Crum

What are you doing in September? I'll be heading to Colorado for a week of centering, conflict resolution training, and personal reflection and rejuvenation. I go every year and always come back with new perspective, new ideas, and new energy.

"This is without a doubt the most beneficial seminar I've attended in my 25 plus years as a professional."

— Darwin Niekerk, Director, Business Management Development, Coors Brewing Company, Golden, CO

Rejuvenate Your Life

Spend a week in a beautiful mountaintop setting learning how to achieve inner balance, empowered relationships, open communications, and clear goals in daily living.

Tom Crum's **Journey to Center** will be held September 12-16, 2005. Fees (\$1850 double occupancy, \$1950 single occupancy) include lodging, healthy meals, materials, and workshop fee.

Journey to Center is your opportunity to learn:

- to turn conflicts into real solutions and increased productivity
- to be calm and act effectively under pressure
- to deal with change and complexity with power
- to create a better working environment
- to turn stress into vitality

If I can answer any questions about the week, give me a call. Hope to see you there!

From Liz Lisk, Director, Staff Development New Hampshire Community Loan Fund

Judy – Remember that meeting I was worried about? I just had it...and it went great – no resistance, no battles, no misunderstanding, no power plays...just simply listening, seeking to understand and offering empathy. I knew I wanted to be curious, and consequently she felt heard and complete, and I learned through the process...all energy heading in the same direction...win/win. Much appreciation (with a bow).

From a New England Life Coach

I had an argument with my grown son that escalated such that he came out with both verbal guns blazing, and then said he didn't want to discuss it anymore and walked away. This was a rare event in our relationship, not a pattern, and I was left feeling stunned and unsure of what to do. I let him know, by email, that I wanted to work things out and that I loved him, and then stepped back and waited for him to let me know when he was ready to talk.

Last evening, my son called, apologized, and said he was ready to talk. Although we didn't address the explosive issue right then, we did catch up on other things and set out our intention to talk soon about this issue. I

was conscious of centering. I immediately put him at ease, hearing in his voice how difficult it had been for him to make the call. When my son and I do have our talk, I am confident we will resolve the issue.

From Alice Meattay, Acupuncturist

Today I used centering before calling my Mom's lawyer and it was a totally pleasant exchange. Thank you.

OFFERING e-news!

In addition to receiving *Power & Presence* three times a year, would you like to **receive regular monthly tips and advice on centering, conflict and communication?** I have a new e-zine – like a magazine but sent by e-mail. It is free, fun, and full of how-to articles and inspiration. My subscribers tell me it arrives "at just the right time" each month.

It's called **Ki Moments**, and you can subscribe on my website: www.judyringer.com (We never share subscriber information.)

resources

What's new at JudyRinger.com?

Power & Presence Training has a new, user-friendly website. When you have a few minutes, visit www.judyringer.com. Listen to the new **Audio Message** on the Homepage. Download articles with conflict management FAQs, powerful conversation tools, and ways to turn difficult situations around – all on the **Free Articles** page.

Ki Moments

Our one-year-old electronic e-zine won an award this summer for publishing excellence. Called **Ki Moments**, it consists of monthly tips and reminders about conflict and communication delivered by email. A *Ki Moment* is any moment that requires your full attention, your power, and your presence. Quality of life is contingent upon the choices you make in these moments. Get a free centering tune up once a month. Subscribe at: www.judyringer.com.

AskJudyRinger.com

Are you worried about a critical conversation that is coming up, wondering what to say when your teammate is late to an important meeting, or curious about how to manage your reactivity when pressed for time or performance? We have a new website specifically devoted to answering questions about conflict, communication, and using your power in more purposeful ways. Visit AskJudyRinger.com, and send your questions. We'll do our best to help out.

Portsmouth Aikido

Portsmouth Aikido is an ongoing martial arts school located at the Seacoast Family Y in Portsmouth. Many of the principles reflected in *Power & Presence* come from aikido, the Japanese martial art that teaches self-defense through redirection of energy. Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. and Sundays at 1:00 and 2:15 p.m. Beginners through advanced are always welcome. Stop by anytime and watch a class, or visit our web site for more information – www.portsmouthaikido.com

The next **Aikido Beginner's Class** will start at the Seacoast Family Y on September 25. The six-week course will run through October 30, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. each Sunday. The cost is \$50.00 per person for the course and anyone aged 12 or older is welcome. For information or to register, please visit www.PortsmouthAikido.com, or call 603-431-8560.

Power & Presence Training Associates

Power & Presence Training is a company that provides unique training for specific needs. Any of the workshops in this newsletter can be tailored to your goals, and you will find additional programs at www.JudyRinger.com.

At Power & Presence Training, we have associates with expertise in conflict and stress management, leadership development, strategic planning, customer service, and powerful presentations. Please contact us to discuss your training needs.

public workshops

(See calendar to the right for dates and times.)

Powerful Presentations

This empowering workshop for beginning to advanced presenters combines training in good vocal technique with practice in giving clear, effective, and compelling presentations. Judy Ringer and Susan Losapio team up to help participants develop a more powerful voice, enhance confidence and presence, and connect with an audience. You'll learn simple kinesthetic exercises you can practice daily and use before, during, and after presentations. You will also be guided in the Four Defining Characteristics of a Powerful Presentation and have the opportunity to deliver several one-minute presentations on tape. You'll receive individual coaching and have the video to review at home.

Managing Difficult Situations by Managing Yourself (at USM)

If managing people has become frustrating, if your relationships with co-workers has deteriorated to the point of avoidance, or if you find yourself wishing, "If only he/she would change, life would be so great!" then come view life from a more powerful perspective. Using Eastern and Western methods, you'll practice skills such as centering, appreciation, and co-creation, and make connections to workplace applications such as conflict, relationship management, training, and teamwork. Instead of reacting to circumstances, you will learn to breathe, evaluate, and make choices that director your energy effortlessly toward your vision. The course includes 7 contact hours of **continuing education credit** through the University of Southern Maine, in Portland.

We Have to Talk: Holding Difficult Conversations Well

What makes difficult conversations so hard? Based on the text *Difficult Conversations*, by Stone, Patton and Heen of the Harvard Negotiation Project, this program

introduces new strategies for dealing with tough topics, sharing difficult information, and managing interpersonal conflict through inquiry, advocacy and acknowledgment. You'll practice mental, behavioral and verbal skills that will help you to feel more confident expressing yourself, understanding others, and transforming difficult conversations into learning conversations.

Objectives:

- Understand best practices for holding difficult conversations
- Practice behavioral and verbal conversation skills
- Apply understanding and skills to real life scenarios

Ki Moments Wins National Writing Award

As you know, I have a new online newsletter called **Ki Moments**, which consists of regular monthly reminders and quick tips on centering, conflict, and communication – very much like *Power & Presence*, but shorter, more frequent, and delivered via email.



This summer, *Ki Moments* received a national award. Sponsored by Communications Concepts, APEX Awards are given each year to writers and designers of publications in a variety of media applications. The awards are based on "excellence in graphic design, editorial content, and overall communications effectiveness and excellence."

Ki Moments won an APEX 2005 Award in the "One to Two Person-Produced Newsletters" category.

It's great to be recognized, and it is your endorsement that I value the most. If you haven't already subscribed, try out *Ki Moments* (by visiting www.judyringer.com). Let me know how I'm doing, and how I can continue to support you.

Tuesday, September 20 • 9 am - 4 pm
POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch included)

Location: Portsmouth/Exeter area - TBD
To register: Return form below, call, email or register online at www.JudyRinger.com

Wednesday, September 28 • 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
MANAGING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS BY MANAGING YOURSELF

Tuition: \$175.00 per person
Includes 7 hours

Continuing Education Credits
Location: USM Center for Continuing Education
Portland, ME
To Register: Call (207) 780-5900

Tuesday, November 15 • 9 am - 4 pm
WE HAVE TO TALK: HOLDING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WELL

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch, workbook, and *Difficult Conversations* text included)

New Hampshire Community Technical College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH
To register: Return form below, call, email or register online at www.JudyRinger.com

Please register early.
All workshops have minimum and maximum participant requirements.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS

The following are examples of programs designed for organizations. Additional workshop descriptions can be found at www.JudyRinger.com. All trainings are tailored to meet specific goals and objectives. Please call for additional information.

CORPORATE/BUSINESS SEMINARS

- Conflict in the Workplace
- Managing Difficult Conversations
- Managerial Courage: Addressing Disrespectful Behavior
- Creating a Positive Work Environment
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
 - Powerful Presentations
 - Principled Negotiation

PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

- The Magic of Conflict
- Violence: Dealing with Anger (for students)
- Helping Students Deal with Anger and Conflict (for teachers)
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively

registration

Please reserve space for me in your upcoming workshop:

Title of Workshop: _____

Total Cost: _____ Deposit enclosed: _____ (minimum \$50)*

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (day): _____ (night): _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

*Full deposit refundable one week prior to workshop date.

Are you interested in a program for your organization or work group?

Put *Power & Presence* to work for you:

- By phone 603-431-8560 • By email Judy@JudyRinger.com
- Online at JudyRinger.com on the Contact page.

MAIL TO: Judy Ringer • 76 Park Street • Portsmouth, NH • 03801-5031



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Each time we get back in touch with ourselves, conditions become favorable for us to encounter life in the present moment.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

quotables

Excellent! Judy's course should be a requirement for supervisors and managers. Very useful tools to implement right away.

Judy is a calming influence, gives good examples, suggestions, and phrases for how to say things. We all gained confidence in preparing to deal with difficult employment performance issues.

Your workshop on Managing Difficult Conversations was enormously useful. The new tools helped me prepare for a difficult conversation with my business group, and I'm happy to report that it went exceptionally well - better than expected!



solutions

question

"Limbo" is one of my biggest challenges and it unbalances me unbelievably. Embarking on change is no sweat next to not having any particular direction in which to focus. Can you speak to coping with uncertainty?

answer

When things are uncertain, I visualize the outcome I would like (even if I'm not sure it will happen) and work towards it. Sometimes the "working towards it" is nothing more than going about my daily routine as best I can and continuing to send energy toward the vision. I do my best and let the rest go.

It isn't easy, so in the meantime take care of yourself. Take yourself out to lunch, sit in the park, go on a hike, or walk with a friend. As you allow yourself the freedom to "be" in limbo, you may find that it offers gifts that a go-getter like yourself hadn't dreamed of. And while you're exploring being without direction, you might find that the right direction offers itself to you. Don't fight limbo, explore it.



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 Communication Skills
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