

Power & Presence

Winter 2005

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

Going to War...And Thoughts About Interplanetary Travel *By Judy Ringer*

By the time this goes to print the elections will have been over for months, but as I write they are real and fresh. I wish people could listen and talk to each other. What's stopping us?

Today I had the experience of listening to a presentation by a young man – the son of a friend – who's home on leave serving with the National Guard in Iraq. This young boy, though how can I call him that now, is wearing fatigues and barely sprouting whiskers, yet knows more of a certain kind of world than I will ever know. I had to listen; I wanted to listen; I was all ears and, by the end of his presentation, all tears. I'm not sure of all the reasons, but here are a few:

- He's so young and has seen so much.
- He cares deeply for his family, his community, and his country, and he clearly loves people.
- I see there are soldier-humanitarians in the world, just as there are nurses, doctors, teachers, and priests who are.
- I'm struck by his story about soldiers handing out backpacks so that Iraqi children can go to school prepared.
- I know this young man has to return to Iraq in one week, and I'm imagining the look on his parents' faces when they say goodbye.
- I feel the need most of us have to advance a world that is safe, free, and just, and the pain of how close and yet how far we appear to be from doing it.
- I'm wondering how we might learn to talk to each other about our differences instead of hating each other for them.

This young man's powerful presentation brought me back to the divided, blame-filled, mutually attacking, skeptical election process we recently engaged in. This is a kind of war, isn't it? *I'm right! No, I'm right! He's stupid! Yeah, well, he's incoherent!*

I believe we have more in common than we think in where we want to go together. It may not seem so, but we don't really know because we don't fully understand what our counterparts want. We would each rather be right than learn the answers.

I'm reminded of the old Marlboro commercial where the guy with the black eye says, "I'd rather fight than switch." I'm not necessarily advocating switching, changing, or agreeing. But can't we find a way to argue more constructively? Instead of promoting a candidate, I'd like to encourage a dialogue that promotes connection rather than accusations that emphasize our disconnection and growing polarization. Instead of listening for what we don't agree with, could we listen for what we do agree with and build on that?

Interplanetary Visitors

Let me give an example. In talking with good friends about who we were going to vote for last November, I asked why they felt so strongly about their choice, and I listened with the goal of completely understanding why they were in favor of it.

I pretended I was hosting a visitor from another planet. If E.T. suddenly landed in my living room, I probably wouldn't say, *No your thinking is wrong. Let me tell you The Truth.* I'd probably be incredibly interested in learning what his thinking was. I'd want to know everything about his/her/its planet. *How fascinating! Wow, tell me more.* Wouldn't it be the same for you? Wouldn't you be all ears?

I propose we treat our opponents in disagreement as if they were guests from another planet. In some sense they are, aren't they? From the Democrat's point of view, isn't the Republican that different? Wouldn't it be interesting to know why they think the way they do?

If you're saying *No, thanks, I don't want to know why they believe these things*, is it because you already think you know? Or is it because you're worried that they not only want to share what they think, they also want to convert you? Maybe you just perceive that they do. What difference does it make anyway? You can choose to make up your own mind – can't you?

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E.T.

In our interplanetary visitor analogy, would I be worried that E.T. was going to convert me? I hope I'd be instinctively curious; that I'd want to learn everything I could in the time I was given. This is how I felt with my friend's son. I had so many questions I couldn't begin to frame them all. What is your job? How hot is it over there? (150+ degrees F, if you're curious). What's the most danger you've been in? What are the Iraqi people like? What do you do to relax?

My point is (and I *am* trying to convert you): If we want to be of use in this troubled world, we have to stop making enemies of each other. I know someone out there is saying: *Tell this to George Bush*, or, *Tell this to the terrorists*. I'm saying, just do it. Do it yourself and others will eventually catch on. When people have beliefs that bother you, behaviors that make you want to grind your teeth, be curious. Invite them to tell you more about who, what, how and why they are. You'll be endlessly engaged, amused, fascinated and learning. You don't need to agree with them or convince them that they're wrong. Just listen. You may find that the gift is yours, and it's something completely other and more wonderful than what you imagined.

I watched a documentary this past year on Boston's "Big Dig." Setting aside for a moment the cost overruns and traffic congestion, the human ingenuity required to build the foundations and bridges (most of it invisible to the traveler) that are part of this formidable construction project is truly mind-boggling.

It's interesting, isn't it, that humanity's most critical challenge is also about building foundations and bridges. Meeting this challenge doesn't cost anything, and it will free up a lot of human congestion. It may be more formidable than the Big Dig, because we can't solve it with money and computers, or even artful thinking. It must be solved in each human heart. But I believe this, too, can be artfully done – if we talk and listen to one another.

Wishing you a year of curiosity, learning, and bridge building.

**Conflict Management
Communication Skills
Training & Facilitation**



Judy Ringer



real life

From a New Hampshire Librarian

I had an opportunity to practice recently. Our library experienced a messy computer crash, with compound mistakes resulting in a loss of about 20% of our database. Morale was low, and the staff was experiencing a huge emotional and physical burden. A very strong and organized assistant had been giving me trouble, but I was not ready to address whatever was bothering her because I knew I was off-balance myself. I also knew I could not wait too long to talk because the air was thick with tension.

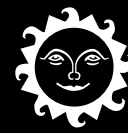
About an hour after I returned from your workshop she exploded with a litany of my faults. I was able to listen until she finished, finding my stillpoint. I told her that I would take seriously all her remarks, even the ones I could not act upon immediately. I then told her I thought her work was of excellent quality and that anything she perceived coming from me was not a criticism, whereupon I saw this very strong, self-reliant woman shedding tears. This embarrassed her, so I thanked her for her honesty and told her we could talk again. She apologized for her manner of speaking. I assured her that we were all under

stress, so the way her feelings came out was probably not the presentation she would use at other times.

We are now up and running with the database, there is laughter in the building, I have a fine assistant who again shares little stories about her many adventures, and I remember to center as often as I can. I practice breathing, and it's wonderful!

From Ron Shadroy, Airport Property Management/Aviation Education

I just completed an Aviation Career Education program where I gave two presentations, one opening the program and one as part of the closing ceremony, all in the presence of some top level VIPs. Doing my best to keep my composure, I spoke to everyone in the room, making eye contact with as many as possible. Attending your class on Effective Presentations gave my presentation new meaning. I spoke with enthusiasm and felt strong. At the end there was loud applause, which I accepted graciously.



Good listening...is profoundly communicative.
And struggling to understand communicates
the most positive message of all.

– Difficult Conversations, Stone, Patton, and Heen

resources

Ki Moments

How are you handling the Ki Moments in your life? In addition to *Power & Presence*, we publish **monthly tips on conflict and communication** through our new email magazine (aka "e-zine") – "**Ki Moments.**" Ki (from Ai-Ki-do) is the Japanese for life energy. 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 key moments. Sign up for our monthly reminders at: <http://www.judyringer.com>

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. You may stop by anytime and watch a class, or visit our web site for more information – <http://www.portsmouthaikido.com>

The next **Aikido Beginner's Class** will start at the Seacoast Family Y on January 23. The six-week course will run through February 27, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. each Sunday. The cost is \$50.00 per person for the course and anyone aged 12 and older is welcome. For information or to register, please visit www.PortsmouthAikido.com.

Power & Presence Training Associates

Power & Presence Training Associates 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 <http://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.

"First of all...if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

–To Kill A Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Very little grows on jagged rock.
Be ground.
Be crumbled,
so wildflowers will come up where you are.
You've been stony for too many years.
Try something different.
Surrender.

– Rumi (translation by Coleman Barks)

workshops

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.

Women's Self Defense

Do you wonder what you would do in the event of a physical attack? If you would like to feel more confident physically, generate calm under pressure, and practice verbal and physical skills to disarm a potential assailant, join Fiona Blyth and Judy Ringer for women's self-defense and assertiveness training. Fiona is a 3rd degree black belt in aikido, and teaches at New England Aikikai in Cambridge Massachusetts. Judy is a black belt in aikido and founder and chief instructor of Portsmouth Aikido, Portsmouth, NH. Participants will:

- Increase physical, verbal, and emotional power
- Learn to turn a freeze response into an action response
- Practice effective self protection skills for common types of physical assault
- Begin to control fear and make wise choices in physically threatening situations

"I really enjoyed the workshop – perhaps even more the second time."

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

The Magic of Conflict

Based on Thomas Crum's influential text on the Aiki approach to resolving conflict, this one-day workshop offers mind/body practice in the skills of centering, discovery, appreciation and the willingness to change ourselves in order to achieve our goals. You'll learn verbal strategies and practice communication skills to engage others in problem-solving dialogue.

Benefits include:

- Increased awareness and perspective in conflict situations
- Skill and presence under pressure
- Emotion management
- Practice in effective communication

e OFFERING news!

Many of our subscribers are saying they prefer receiving *Power & Presence* by email. It's easier, faster, and saves paper, ink and trees. If you'd like to receive *Power & Presence* this way, email judy@judyringer.com.

You will also receive our new monthly "e-zine," called "Ki Moments". It arrives in your email inbox at the "perfect time" each month with **timely reminders and tips on centering, conflict and communication.**

Email us at judy@judyringer.com or sign up for "Ki Moments" at our website: www.judyringer.com. (We never share subscriber information.)

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

workshop calendar

February 15 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch included)

New Hampshire Community Technical College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH

To register: Return form below, call, email
or register online at
<http://www.JudyRinger.com>

March 9 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

THE MAGIC OF CONFLICT

Tuition: \$135.00 per person

(Lunch, workbook, and *The Magic of Conflict*
text included)

New Hampshire Community Technical College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH

To register: Return form below, call, email
or register online at
<http://www.JudyRinger.com>

April 2 • 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch included)

New Hampshire Community Technical College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH

To register: Return form below, call, email,
or register online at
<http://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. 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



Judy Ringer

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inside

- *Going to War...*
- *Ki Moments*
- *The Magic of Conflict*
- *Women's Self Defense*
- *E-News!*



The deepest form of understanding another person is empathy. Empathy involves a shift from my observing how you seem on the outside, to my imagining what it feels like to be you on the inside, wrapped in your skin with your set of experiences and background, and looking out at the world through your eyes...

—*Difficult Conversations, Stone, Patton, and Heen*

quotables

- “
- *It's rare that a training impacts me to this degree. I have gained much useful understanding and concrete skills in getting my emotions to work for me!*
 - *I loved this class. I actually did not want to leave. Thank you Judy.*
 - *Thank you for providing this valuable training to our leaders. Your work will no doubt have an impact on this organization.*
- ”

Printed on recycled paper

solutions

question

I keep having run-ins with my assistant. I ask her for something and get resistance. Sometimes it's nonverbal. Sometimes she has reasons why she can't do things the way I want. I can be a perfectionist, but I kind of think my way is okay.

answer

It's no fun to work so closely with someone with whom every interaction seems like a test. And it's okay to want things done a certain way. However, it's also important to get to the source of your assistant's resistance, because if you're feeling resistance she probably is too. She may feel unappreciated or unheard, which means she may be holding back on some great ideas.

You might experiment with giving her more responsibility. For example, ask for her suggestions about how to complete a project before you start. Where does she think she'll be most useful? You may find more cooperation and enthusiasm for the project. If that fails, talk to her about the difficulty as you see it and ask her about what things look like from her side. Leave lots of room for her to share her point of view. Good luck!



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