

FIONA HOBAN

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A real bashing for my delicate ego

Somebody pointed out an aspect of my behaviour to me last week, and made it quite clear that they did not approve of it one little bit. I was slightly taken aback and, to be honest, wasn't particularly impressed with their tone. How and ever, I let them have their say but was very aware of a number of internal reactions:

- I did not like being corrected. I had to fight off the urge to defend my position (even though I knew it didn't warrant defending).
- I was very quick to mentally make an enemy out of this person and almost decided there and then that I wouldn't be in any great hurry to speak to them again any time soon.
- I found myself wanting to justify my behaviour and set about blaming others for making me act as I did. (Not unlike the argument "she made me hit her.")
- I desperately wanted to retaliate with ripostes along the lines of "well, you're a fine one to talk; ha, talk about pot calling kettle black!" etc.

What a delicate little ego I have!

A number of years ago I attended a workshop, and, out of the blue, one of the participants interrupted the facilitator to express their dissatisfaction with the choice of material used for that particular task. It was a fair point she was making, but I felt it was a little bit insensitive to blurt it out as she did. The class immediately became very quiet and a tension hung in the air – how would the facilitator handle this? He let her speak.

She took full advantage of this and continued on what could only be described as a

bit of a rant. She went off-topic and onto all sorts of other gripes she had obviously been harbouring for some time. She even got a little bit personal with the facilitator and the line between making a point and getting personal and rude was becoming blurred. On and on she went, uninterrupted. I was watching the facilitator with intense interest (I often work with groups and was keen to see how this situation would be dealt with). It was hard to read his expression.

Finally, she had had her say and finished by crossing her arms in front of her chest, saying something like "that's all". You could hear a pin drop in the room and all of a sudden people seemed to develop a curiosity for the floor and their shoes.

The facilitator nodded slightly at her, and with a kindness I will never forget simply said: "say more".

ANGER WAS GONE

Those two words changed everything. She continued to "say more" but the anger was gone from her voice; the energy changed; she was less defensive and this allowed her to open up and be more honest in explaining what was really bugging her. They say behind all anger is hurt; nothing more and nothing less. The facilitator's kindness went behind the anger and gave voice to the hurt and the pain. This in itself helped alleviate it.

Can you imagine if he had cut her off? Made an enemy of her? Pointed out how rude she was? Gave as good as he got?


Those two words "say more" didn't come to me last week, my delicate ego got in the way. But I didn't retaliate, which for me, is no small thing.



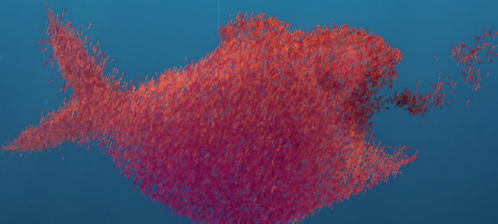
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AS SEEN ON TV!

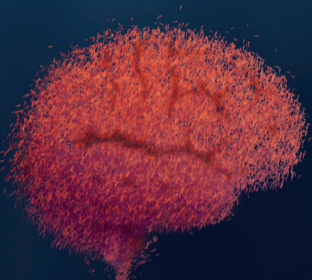
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