

The Nail

This is a test.

Watch the following two minute video clip and decide which person you sympathize with the most.



<https://youtu.be/-4EDhdAHrOg>

Debrief:

If you're a "let's fix this problem as fast as possible" person (whether male or female), you probably sympathized with the man in this clip ... and think that the woman needs to get past her emotions and pull the stupid nail out of her head.

If you're a "I'd like someone to understand how I'm feeling" person, you probably sympathized with the woman ... and think the man needs to learn how stop fixing everything and develop some empathy.

If either of these descriptions fits you, you almost missed a valuable learning opportunity.

Yes, it's easy to identify with a person who is like you, and to see the flaws in those who are unlike you. But if that's all you ever do, you'll only ingrain your inclination to be a "fixer" or a "feeler," and develop a more critical spirit toward those who are different.

Watch and Grow

Instead of perpetuating your narrow inclinations, use this clip to improve your other-awareness, which is your ability to understand and empathize with the experiences, emotions, and needs of others.

Watch the clip again and pretend that the problem is not as ridiculously obvious as a nail in the head. Imagine instead that the woman has an extremely difficult and painful relationship with her mother, or sister, or boss. Imagine also that she is definitely contributing to her problems through her own critical attitude, sharp tongue, or insensitivity.

Now, if you're a fixer, imagine how helpful the man would be if he said, "Listen, all you need to do is stop being so critical (or sharp-tongued or insensitive) yourself." How do you think that is going to sound to her ears? It may be partly true, but unless he first listens to her and shows that he has some understanding of what she is experiencing, his words will sound simplistic, callous and even judgmental.

If you're a feeler, imagine how the man is processing this conversation. He's being deluged with waves of intense and unpleasant emotions. That is not fun. He sees some

ways to begin alleviating some of the woman's pain and he wants to help her as quickly as he can, largely because he cares for her and hates to see her suffer.

The point is, there is some legitimacy in each person's perspective, as well as some blind spots.

Each of them – and you and me in similar situations – would benefit by taking a deep breath, praying for patience and grace, and asking ourselves questions like these:

- “How is she (or he) feeling right now?”
- “What is he (or she) trying to tell me?”
- “How can I show that I understand and care?”
- “How can I best serve him (or her) in the next ten minutes?”
- “What would she (or he) most appreciate from me right now?”

It's not rocket science. It's relationship.

It's caring enough to slow down, see life through other people's eyes, and look out for their interests as well as your own (Phil. 2:3-4).

– Ken Sande

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Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.