

## Script for Empowered Living Community

### How to live an empowered life through this quarantine period.

Three ideas to communicate better during this quarantine.

By Justin T. Peterson

Hi everyone! I'm Justin Peterson from Ridgecrest, California, and what an honor it is for me to be here with you today on the Empowered Living platform, hosting the show. I know I have really enjoyed, as I'm sure you have, the previous hosts and the great lessons that they have been sharing with us.

When Roddy and Paul asked me to host the show, I thought that it would be helpful to share some ideas on how we can continue to live an empowered life, even though we're going through this coronavirus quarantine period. I believe an empowered life is a life that we're living intentionally, while we're striving to become the best possible people that we can be.

I've heard on the news, recently, that there are indications that some of us might be reaching our limits on how much quarantine we can handle. Apparently, phone calls to divorce attorneys are way up. So, I'd like to share some things today, and some ideas, on how we can communicate better with those that we are in confinement with.

But first, let me give you some background on myself.

Most of my career has been spent in management positions within the hospitality and financial services industries. Over the years I've developed a great passion for helping people grow so that they can realize their potential. In 2015, I became a certified John C. Maxwell Coach to help me in that endeavor.

Something I have been frustrated with over the years is the lack of focus on personal growth in the workplace. We tend to hire people for what they can do, but if we end up firing them, it's usually because of their character or "who they are." Companies are quick to spend money on increasing what employees can do but not so much on improving who they are or increasing their level of personal growth.

That's a serious oversight, in my opinion, because "what we do" is built on the foundation of "who we are". You could have two employees who have the same knowledge and experience, but their quality of work that they produce can vary significantly based on the level of personal growth in their lives.

Well, that frustration led me to start a company called "Growing Personnel", whose purpose is to help organizations implement foundational personal growth in their workplace. I've developed an eight-week online course called "Thinking at the Speed of Life" to help employees understand and develop foundational personal growth.

Some of you are probably familiar with the scene from one of Charles Dicken's stories, where the young orphan, Oliver Twist, is holding up his empty food bowl before the master of the workhouse and he says, "Please sir, I want some more."

"Wanting more" is something that we're all familiar with. In fact, we know that the process of personal growth begins with the desire to be, do, and have more, and when having more is the result of being more and doing more; it doesn't cause a problem.

What does cause a problem is when we have more of something in our life and we haven't been prepared for it.

A classic example is somebody that wins the lottery. They have a lot more money in their life but they weren't prepared for it and pretty quickly we begin to see their true character because of the choices that they make.

Well, I think we're in a similar situation now with the coronavirus quarantine period. People have **MORE** time that they're spending in confinement with others and this is not a situation they were prepared for.

Kids are staying home fulltime and parents have to work from home. But, it's not just that they have to work from home, they also have to keep an eye on the kids to make sure they're doing what they are supposed to be doing. With everybody at home, more meals have to be planned, prepared for, and cleaned up after. It's no wonder that our stress level is high and the relationships with the other people we are confined with, might be suffering.

So, I'd like to share three ideas, things I think that we can do that will improve our communication with those that we are at home with during this extended stay at home period.

The first thing I think we can do is something that Stephen Covey talks about in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. He said we need to "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

In fact, he said that was the single most important principle that he had learned in the field of interpersonal relations and that single principle was the key to effective interpersonal communication.

Most of us don't listen with the intent to understand; we listen with the intent to reply. We're either speaking or we're preparing to speak. When we communicate like that, we miss hearing the message that's being said or the underlying theme of what's being communicated.

We don't have time today to go into exploring paradigms, but something we all do need to keep in mind is that we all see the world, not as it is, but as we are. My wife and I recently celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and while I think we know each other quite well, we do think differently. Now, it's not a case that somebody thinks correctly and somebody thinks incorrectly, we just think differently. We might be speaking the same language, but the interpretation of the words that are being used, could be quite different. To assure mutual understanding, we have to make sure that we know how the other person is interpreting what's being said.

Stephen Covey goes on to say that next to physical survival, the most important thing to human beings is psychological survival. We have some real basic needs that have to be met, things like; we need to be affirmed, we need to be validated, we need to be understood, we need to be appreciated. Once those vital needs are met, then we can move on to influencing and problem-solving.

The second thing I think that we can do is something that Paul and Roddy have been talking about recently as we have been going through Viktor Frankl's book, "Man's Search for Meaning." Viktor Frankl said that in between a stimulus and a response, is a space, and In that space, we have the freedom to choose what our response will be.

While we're confined to close quarters with other people, it's easy to get our buttons pushed. There are many things that are triggers for us. It will take a lot of intentionality but if we choose, we can delay our response for a few seconds and think about a response that will be proactive, and not reactive.

Many people are on automatic pilot. I've heard people say things like, "Well, that person said that bad thing to me, so I had to say that negative thing back." It may be how they usually respond but it isn't how they had to. We have a choice and we have to start being accountable for how we think and how we react.

I've heard Paul Martinelli say that if somebody else is making you feel mad, sad, or glad, you've been had. We give a lot of power away when we believe that other people can make us feel a certain way. We have to remember that we have the choice to feel a certain way. We have to take that power back so that we can transform ourselves into the person that we really want to be.

You may have heard the phrase that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond to it. There are a lot of things that happen in life, including the current Coronavirus pandemic, that we have no control over, but what we do have control over is how we are going to let it affect us and what our attitude towards it will be.

The third thing I think that we can do to improve our communications is something my mother used to tell me when I was a youngster growing up. She said, "Before we speak, there are three things that we need to ask ourselves."

Question #1.

Is what I'm about to say truthful? Is it full of truth, or does it only have bits of truth or some semblance to the truth? Am I using generalities or am I making assumptions? Am I letting gossip creep into my conversation?

Question #2.

Is what I'm about to say helpful? It might even be truthful, but is it something that the other person needs to hear right now? Is it something that supports and builds up the other person?

Question #3.

Is what I'm about to say kind? Do I truly have the other person's best interest at heart? Would I appreciate hearing somebody else tell me this thing?

So in summary, I think that if we keep these three things in mind:

1. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
2. Stop in the space between a stimulus and a response so that we can choose a response that's proactive rather than reactive.
3. Before we speak, ask ourselves; Is what I'm about to say truthful, helpful, and kind?

If we can keep these things in mind, we'll improve our communication with the others that we're in confinement with and we'll be able to keep those cherished relations intact.

I believe that it was the disciple, James, that said if your life is full of difficulties and temptations, then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow.

I have a **gift** for you today, if you go to <https://www.growingpersonnel.com/gift>, there's a **password** there that you can use to access **Week One** of my **online course, *Thinking at the Speed of Life***. Included within **Week One** is a **personal growth self-assessment tool** that helps to reveal your character strengths and weaknesses.

I hope that you got something valuable out of the lesson today, and if you did, I challenge you to go ahead and implement it into your life, and I'm challenging all of us to see how far we can grow.

Thank you.

I would love to help your organization implement some personal growth strategy in your workplace. Please contact me through email at [justinpeterston@growingpersonnel.com](mailto:justinpeterston@growingpersonnel.com) or call me at (760) 495-2167.