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The Thank You Moment THE POWER TO LISTEN

The POWER series by Paulette Sun Davis

“In order to suspend reaction you have to first notice you’re reacting in ways that stop the flow of information or the flow of love.”

This is a practice in listening to feedback. This simple practice will bring your attention to the present so you can listen more effectively.

The *Thank You* moment was serendipitously created for a senior manager who had trouble listening to feedback, which she often heard as criticism instead of information. Her conditioned response was to argue or defend as if the feedback was an attack on her credibility. She knew the way she listened could block any further advancement on the job and was impacting some of her relationships as well. She realized that she was actually training her associates not to give her feedback because of her reactive style. She had a sincere desire to listen differently and understood she needed to change how she viewed feedback.

So here’s what I told her. “Your only response to any feedback you receive this week is to say thank you.” After a week of practice this became known as the *Thank You* moment. Instead of feedback being a trigger for defensiveness it became a signal for gratitude.

She made the commitment to say thank you whenever she received feedback. Saying thank you interrupted her automatic defensive response to anything critical of her performance, processes or strategies. This gave her room to pause and think about what was being said. She noticed that it also relaxed the speaker so they could look into the feedback together and come up with a plan of action.

She realized that the power in the feedback wasn’t in agreeing or disagreeing but in looking into the merit of the information without having already formed an opinion.

Your practice is to first notice how you listen to feedback. Notice any times you attack or defend or blame yourself or another, feel

criticized or just plain feel bad. Catch yourself in the moment when you have an emotional reaction that prevents you from listening and stops the flow of information. At those moments instead of reacting say “thank you.”

Instead of reacting...
say "Thank You"

Feedback is information that can give you insight into your performance, how something worked and how something can be improved. Feedback can also identify what’s missing that could make a difference or inform a course correction that fulfills a goal. Feedback is natural and part of the process of personal growth and getting anything done.

Practice saying thank you to all feedback today. Invite feedback and see what happens to your ability to listen to anyone and to consider something you didn’t already take into account.

This practice comes with a bonus. Not only will information channels stay open, so will your heart.
