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Business Insights

OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

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One of the things that has kept me at Clientek for 20 years now is the way we partner with our customers. Its truly not just a tag line. I've come to realize that the way we work with our clients is the only way I could ever work. We've become trusted partners with our customers. We work with them on significant projects that are critical to their company and personal success. Projects of this importance can lead to emotions running high when there are disagreements during execution.

This year has confronted us all with difficult conversations; not only in business relationships but also within our personal relationships. Covid-19, racial inequality, and the elections have underscored the importance of understanding other points of view - recognizing how other peoples experiences affect and shape them.

It takes a substantial amount of effort to understand another's point of view. This was emphasized for me when

my kids left for college. Given that I attended a Military School, I had no familiarity of my own to draw from and understand what they were about to experience. It made me realize that those experiences are critical in developing someone's point of view.

Kirk wrote about listening in his article a few weeks ago; discussing how to truly hear what people are telling you. To truly listen and understand others, we must focus on them, their ideas, and their point of view, rather than finding a way to defend our own opposing stance. Before we respond, we must ensure that we understand why/how another person came to their opinion or idea. This will likely illustrate aspects of a situation we had not considered and will clarify our own thoughts.

This does not mean we have to agree with them. Kirk once told me that if he and I agreed all the time, then he wouldn't need me anymore. A true partner will disagree with you. It's better to disagree than wonder what value they are

providing. The key to a healthy relationship is to disagree with respect, focus on the problem(s) at hand, and provide real value (not always being right!).

In the end, you and your partners will not remember whose idea was used on that project 5 years ago. What you and your partners will remember is how you treated/were treated. That is what makes a partnership great, valuable, and enjoyable!

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