

I'm Waiting . . . Please Respond

Angels Come into Our Lives to Give Us Wings

Terry Beard

Driving through Central Oregon on a four-hour car ride, my wife Pascale, niece Lilia and I had plenty of time to chat and to drill down to some deeper understanding of an all-too-common behavior pattern in the USA.

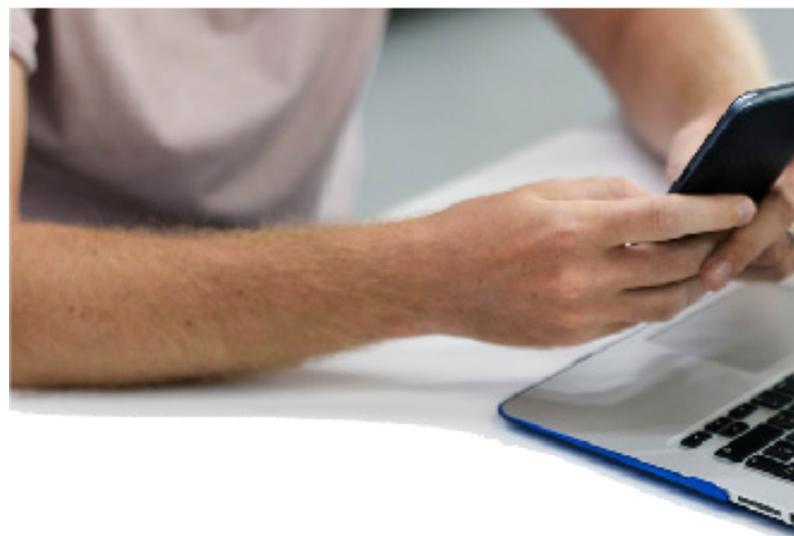
“Lilia, you deserve better,” I said. “Suzy-Q is not playing communication ping-pong with you. You were led to believe that if you reached out to her that she would get back to you. You pinged (texted) her, and she has not responded—no pong, no ping-pong. Forget it.

You cannot count on her, there is and will not be any social security consistency in that relationship. Her failure to get back to you is really non-verbal discouragement. She'll get back to you eventually full of excuses. The alibis list will be endless. The excuse will start off, her saying, ‘I am so sorry I got very busy, yadda yadda, yadda.’”

During the time she stayed with us, I was reminded by her questions of the cultural differences between the USA and France. In our conversations, I found that she spotted some of the cultural differences and questioned me on occasion about communication ping-pong. In the process of sharing with her what I thought about communication, I discovered much that further sensitized me to what is good communication

protocol; what it is and what it is not.

In France, developing friends is like fine wine, it takes time. Once you have discovered a precious friend, *comme un bijou*, (like a jewel) in France it is serious business. If a friend reaches out to you in France, *sans doute*, you get back to them *tout de suite*—right away. Lilia was shocked. She thought that she had a new American friend. Her questions about



communication and expectations hit home for her, and for me, about manners, expectations, and friendship.

In the conversation with Lilia, I suggested she send a text message to Danielle. I said to her “Lilia, you know Danielle, you like her, she is someone that you can count on. Take a risk; trust your gut. You guys really connected when you met.” Lilia nodded in agreement.

It is amazing that oftentimes voices of discouragement not only come to us verbally but non-verbally as well.

Lilia shared a situation which she found very discouraging. She was sent a text message by her new friend Suzy-Q. Lilia responded right away to the request for a rendezvous with her buddy. A few days later she was still waiting to hear back from Suzy-Q. Lilia was in fact put on hold waiting for the phone to ring, or to receive an email or a text message. Still no response. It

had been four days.

Off went the text message to Danielle, within two hours, they had connected and set a date to rendezvous.

Lilia was so happy that she smiled from ear to ear. “Lilia, does it feel good to connect with people that you can count on? No response is

discouragement, you deserve better.” People who withhold by not replying promptly to text messages, emails and voice mails are sending a clear message. It is control and manipulation of

the ping pong ball, there is no communication ping pong in play. Who needs or wants to play with a ball hogger?

Often, I am reminded of a story which supports a conversation which I had with our niece Lilia, while she was staying with us in Portland, Oregon. She is Parisian, born and raised. She was educated à L’Université de La Sorbonne, Paris, France, in the heart of the 6th Arrondissement, where she received both a bachelor’s degree and a masters degree in International Studies. Elle est très intelligente et tres charmante!

People come in to our lives like angels, they leave a message or two. If we heed the messages, we’ll find our freedom. Now that Suzy-Q is out of the picture, a new friend and a real friend has landed, which gives one freedom. It is true angels come to give us wings to freedom.

People set boundaries at times which are out of bounds. Whether they do so consciously or unconsciously it doesn’t matter. What does matter is deciding what will work for you.

Terry Beard initially joined Arlington Club Toastmasters in 2001. He co-founded Portland Rotary Toastmasters in 2015.

Terry is the author of Squelched - Succeeding in Business and Life by Finding Your Voice, published in 2017 and available on Amazon.com.

