** P2PAdvantage**

Gestalt Language Protocol:

The Gestalt Language Protocol comes from Gestalt psychology. Practicing this protocol is a discipline that has far reaching effects on the quality, operation and value derived from a P2P group. The seven points of the protocol are difficult to absorb and practice for new groups. They are however a key component in creating a safe environment where members will feel comfortable sharing openly. Because this protocol can be difficult, we recommend that new groups focus on numbers 1, 2 and 5 in that order of priority.

1. Speak from your own experience rather than give advice.

 a) A tip to ensure that you are speaking from experience—are you

 using the past tense? If you are then it is.

 b) Giving advice of telling someone what to do is a matter of opinion.

 In a situation where there are many opinions, mine always wins.

 c) By sharing experiences, we end up with data. Better data allows

 for better decision making.

 d) “I would” is synonymous with “you should.” Both are a form of

 advice.

 e) No one but the person who needs the group’s help is going through

 the situation and all its intensity. No one else must live with the

 consequences and what works for me doesn’t have to work for you.

 f) The most help you can provide someone is to share your relevant

 experience in a similar situation.

 g) As someone once put it, “I can’t possibly insult you by telling

 you what I did.”

 h) Avoid the word “you” during the summary stage of the presentation.

 This will help keep you from giving advice.

 i) Speaking from experience allows for sharing which leads to

 bonding and the building of cohesion amongst a group.

2. Use “I” statements not “one” or “you,” but “I.”

 a) This is to help in clarifying what is being said. If I were to say “do

 you know when you are driving down the road at 80mph and you see a cop hiding in the weeds and your heart drops to your

 knees…”. We do not know if that statement is hypothetical, we do

 not know if It happened, we do not know if I had the experience.

 It also gives the impression that it happens to everyone. If on the

 other hand if I were to say, “this morning when I was driving to the

 airport, I was doing 80mph and I saw a cop hiding on the side of the

 road and my heart dropped to my knees…” That would be a

 tangible valid statement that you can count on.

 b) Likewise, if I were to say, “when one has money life is better” I am

 not taking ownership for the statement. Instead, I would say, “when

 I have money life is better.”

 c) This does not mean that you cannot say “you” when you are talking

 to someone. It simply means you cannot say “you” when you are

 talking about yourself and you cannot say “you” during the

 experience sharing phase of a presentation.

3. Speak in specifics not generalities. If I were to say, “all men are

 workaholics” that would be a generality. Instead, if I were to say, “my dad

 and my partner are workaholics” that would be specific.

4. Ask “How” not “Why” to prevent defensiveness. If I were to say “why

 didn’t you fire your bookkeeper when you found out he was stealing from

 you?” that may be attacking. Instead, if I were to say, “How did you come

 to the decision as to whether or not you should fire your bookkeeper?”

5. Make a statement to declare your position before you ask a question.

 a) This will allow for better understanding of the question.

 b) By explaining the purpose of your question in advance it will be less

 likely to put the presenter on the defensive.

 There are three ways to do this:

 a) Repeat what you think you heard that pertains to your question.

 b) Share from your experience before asking a question.

 c) Tell the presenter why you are asking the question.

6. Say, “I feel” to mean real feelings like sad, mad or glad, rather than saying

 “I feel you are.” P2P Advantage is a uniquely personal experience where emotions are as important to the process as the facts. By asking someone how do you feel, we attempt to evoke the emotions in the person that are perpetuated by the situation. Using feel in the right context will allow for deeper presentations.

7. Replace “I don’t know” with “I won’t decide” or “I don’t want to say.”

 a) If I were to ask you if it is snowing in Alaska today, you may not

 know and the right answer is “I don’t know.” That is a proper use of

 “I don’t know.”

 b) If I went to the office and my partner locked me out of the office and

 I was asked how I feel about it, “I don’t know” does not allow the

 group to get closer to your emotional state. Instead, if I say, “I won’t

 decide” or “I don’t want to say” the group is better able to see that

 there is an emotional side to the issue.