



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC), a nonprofit organization, offers Basic Facilitation Training on October 3 and 4. This course is designed to help people dramatically improve the productivity of their meetings. It prepares them with skills, techniques, and building blocks they need to deliver an effective meeting, including pre-planning; managing interactions; developing ideas; decision-making; preventing and intervening as problems arise; defining next steps, deadlines, and evaluations; and effectively closing the meeting. The training is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the San Mateo County Probation Department in San Mateo. The cost is \$299. The fee includes continental breakfast and training binder. There are discounts for nonprofits (10 percent), groups of four participants or more (30 percent), and current PCRC volunteers (50 percent). There is also a convenient automated payment plan. Also, participants will get a \$25 tuition discount on the Advanced Facilitation Training, October 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the same location. Visit pcrcweb.org, email Sara Randazzo at srandazzo@pcrcweb.org, or call 650-513-0330 extension 305.

STIFF UPPER LIP

This is such a clichéd expression that it is difficult to imagine doing anything else with a stiff upper lip apart from keeping it. If you try to hold your upper lip stiff, your facial expression will appear aloof and unsmiling, betraying little if any feeling you might be experiencing. That demeanor is the source of “keep a stiff upper lip.” The phrase is similar to “bite the bullet” and “keep your chin up.” So, where did the “stiff upper lip” originate? In 1963, P. G. Wodehouse published a novel called “Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves” and you can’t get much more English than that. Strange then that a phrase so strongly associated with the UK should have originated in America. The first printed reference to it that I know of is in the “Massachusetts Spy” (June 1815): “I kept a stiff upper lip, and bought [a] license to sell my goods.” That citation doesn’t explicitly refer to keeping one’s emotions in check, but a slightly later one, from the Ohio newspaper “The Huron Reflector” (1830), makes the meaning unambiguous: “I acknowledge I felt somehow queer about the bows; but I kept a stiff upper lip, and when my turn came, and the Commodore of the Police axed [sic] me how I come to be in such company... I felt a little better.” The expression can be found in several U.S. references from the early 19th century and was commonplace there by 1844, which is the date of the earliest example that I can find from a British source. (A Phrase a Week, phrases.org.uk)

DO SOCIAL VALUES MATTER ANYMORE?

With recent debates about whether Facebook should come with a warning label due to its addictive nature and exacerbation of asocial behavior, it’s difficult to believe that social values matter anymore. In fact, Nielsen’s consumer report reveals that on average, people spend 6.5 hours a day on social media sites. Does this mean that actual face-time with friends and family has become unimportant? Not so, according to a study by Queendom.com. Social values are still important – in fact, they are a lot more significant than people would expect. Much like the decreasing impact of financial compensation as a motivator, [Queendom’s](http://Queendom.com) analysis of 2,163 people who took the Values Profile indicates that money and even power are becoming less important.

“The decrease in importance of money is notable,” points out Dr. Ilona Jerabek, president of the company. “One would think that the personal value of money would vary depending on whether a person is financially well off or not, but this wasn’t the case at all. In fact, when we compared the value scores of people with upper and lower socioeconomic status, their results on the Financial Security value were exactly the same, indicating that this value is only of moderate importance in people’s lives, regardless of their income tax bracket. In fact, there was very little difference in scores as it relates to socioeconomic status. Both groups placed high importance on social values.”

RAINBOW ISLAND FOR SALE

The Rainbow Island Restaurant building at 55 Bill Drake Way in the Manor district is for sale for a cool \$1 million, with the restaurant business itself available for an additional \$80K, according to my real estate source.

FOGHORN

Confirming Scott McKellar’s report of a late-night foghorn, Chris Fogel says, “I too can make out a foghorn at regular intervals during quiet evenings in the Linda Mar Valley. My guess is that it’s from the Pillar Point Harbor.”

CHANGE OF HEART

A newlywed with doubts about her 8-day-old marriage pushed her husband off a cliff at Glacier National Park, and he died. (Chronicle News Service, September 11)

SITSEER

Beautiful fog: vimeo.com/simonchristen/adrift

SWAMI SEZ

“I was running out of new tricks to teach our dog, so I placed a penny on the rug, but so far he’s been unable to pick up the cent.” (Scotty Kindfire)

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