



Is my “Safe Place” a Deception?

Recently, a good friend and I were out mountain biking. Both of us have had pretty major surgery within the last twelve months; his back, my knee... SO, unlike in the past, we were taking it slow. (I need my wife to read this... ☺)

We were biking up a hill and I looked behind us to see another biker gaining ground. In the past, it would have meant it was time to speed up so he couldn't pass us. Not so this time around. I saw a place I could pull over off the singletrack trail, but kept pedaling off to the side of the trail. So did my friend. The guy catching us made some comment about how hard it was to build these trails and that we should just stop and not ride off the trail... As he went past, my friend said, *You're welcome!* This unleashed a blue-streak tirade from the guy... My friend repeated, *You're welcome!*, and I said *Wow!* to the guy. Continued blue streak... My friend and I both agreed, *This guy has anger issues!* He was on his bike and kept riding. He wouldn't have cussed up a blue streak to us if he'd stopped and looked us in the eye. At least I don't think he would have... My friend and I continued to process this. What might have happened had there been an “encounter”? I pondered out loud if this was really any different than what I do when I'm driving behind someone and we are both stopped at a stoplight. The light turns green, but the person in front of me doesn't move. I can cuss him/her out... Not good, Mark! But I'm doing it from behind my windshield, windows rolled up. I wouldn't get out of the car, knock on that person's window, look them eye-to-eye and cuss them out.

I do it from the “safety” of my own car.

This later led me to thinking about social media. How many rants, how many bully-ing's occur on social media?

Arrows shot at “the enemy” from behind a screen??

We create the semblance of a safe place behind whatever “screen” we sit. That place is our “bunker.”

But, is that really a “safe place”?

I'm afraid we've (I've) been deceived. Thinking that behind the screen is my safe place leads me to what? False (faux) relationship. We've (again, I've) substituted “behind a screen” for true, face-to-face (eye-to-eye), vulnerable communication and relationship. We end up in this “faux” psychologically safe place, where we think we are safe, but in truth miss out on SO much. I've referenced this “psychologically safe place” before. That place where I can let my guard down – take off the mask, the armor that I both hide behind and use to “protect” myself.

True psychological safe places open the door to vulnerability, to a place where authentic relationships can grow and thrive.

When I feel psychologically safe, I risk more. Trust grows.

When these things are true, I know you won't take something I put out there and use it to hurt me, at least, not intentionally.

**What would it be to know
that nothing I say to you
would cause you to
leave the table of relationship?**

Neuroscientists tell us that if we experience psychologically safety, we will engage at a deeper level. Think of your family or your colleagues at work.

**Bring out the best in them
by making them feel psychologically safe.**

Set the table for that kind of communication, engagement and relationship. I'd place my bet that even productivity will improve.

So, as John Mayer sings in *Say*:

Take all of your wasted honor
Every little past frustration
Take all of your so-called problems,
Better put 'em in quotations

Say what you need to say

Walking like a one man army
Fighting with the shadows in your head
Living out the same old moment
Knowing you'd be better off instead,
If you could only . . .

Say what you need to say

Have no fear for giving in
Have no fear for giving over
You'd better know that in the end
It's better to say too much
Than never to say what you need to say again

Even if your hands are shaking
And your faith is broken
Even as the eyes are closing
Do it with a heart wide open

If you want to watch/listen, here's the "official video." (His song was in a movie I'd highly recommend – *The Bucket List*.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phalkIEphSM> *

So, find a true psychologically safe place so that you can say what you need to say... You'll be glad you did!

*We've tried to find a way to post this song to our website. It speaks to the work we do at *Family Business Counsel*. So far, we haven't been able to find the right hoop to jump through to avoid any sort of copyright issues. If you can point us in the right direction, please let us know.