

Digging Deeper

The Power of Visual Imagery

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I am always amazed at how well we humans – consumers, customers, employees, doctors, patients – respond to visual imagery exercises. I’ve found even the most rational, left-brained respondent can surprise themselves during imagery sorts, collaging and other visual techniques I use to uncover more deeply held feelings and perceptions.

The power of visual imagery provided a path to new insights during a recent series of employee workshops designed to understand how current policies and procedures were being viewed and implemented in the field.

“visual imagery provided a path to new insights”

This group was articulate and willing to share their points of view, but often chose to express themselves very factually in front of their peers, with rational justifications for their opinions.

It was time to unleash the power of visual imagery. The change in tone during the image sort was amazing. Suddenly, even the most politically correct respondents were holding up pictures that expressed their frustration with lack of teamwork in

implementing policies and procedures. It was as if a dam had burst, taking the prior commentary to an entirely new, richer and deeper level. As always, it’s not about the specific image they chose but more about what they read into that image and why it resonated so strongly: each picture is a metaphor that helps bring forth those critical and compelling subconscious feelings.

“imagery exercise allowed us to focus on the real problem at hand,”

Most importantly, the imagery exercise allowed us to focus on the real problem at hand, which wasn’t the policies and procedures themselves, but insufficient and inconsistent training across the organization. This was extremely enlightening and helpful for my client, as it redirected their immediate focus to an opportunity area that will ultimately ensure far better understanding of and consistent compliance with essential policies and procedures.

