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Week Five: Frame it Larger

When we're locked into a particular view of an interpersonal situation, we are usually convinced we're right. Unfortunately, the other person is equally convinced that she's right! Someone once wisely asked, "Would you rather be right or married?" It's a reasonable question. Yet, giving up our story sometimes kicks in every survival instinct we have.

The authors of the wonderful book, Difficult Conversations, talk about entering such a conversation from the "third story." This requires finding a view of the situation that is neutral, accepting, and larger than either story separately. This new story transcends and includes both the individual stories. Neither person has to be made wrong, and the larger, more inclusive story provides a greater and more presence-based view.

Instead of "You said X and I say Y," the larger view begins with "You and I seem to see this in very different ways, and both of us are convinced we're right. Yet, we have to come to agreement and move forward. How can we work together to bridge this gap?"

Consider a disagreement that you've had recently with someone. What's your view? What's the other person's view? And, how can a larger view describe the overall situation such that no one is made wrong, and the disagreement is framed in a larger context more likely to lead to resolution?

Now, step into that larger view. Reside firmly in it, so that it becomes your felt perspective, rather than simply an intellectual construct. Let this be your truth in the situation.

Presence often results from the instantaneous recognition that a situation is bigger than we thought. There's always a larger interpretation; finding it frees us from the restrictions of our usual view of a situation, and often reveals new possibilities for action.

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