

Renovation Psychology® Advice for the Home Team Toolbox



Dear Dr. Debi,
My partner never wants me to work along side, but I would love to. Sometimes I just show up, but that doesn't work either; they get mad. What is up?
Signed, Lonely Hammer

Dear Hammer,
Your desire to help is a really nice asset to your

team. We talked in other columns about tallying your talents and assigning roles together. Perhaps you might review those so that you can find a useful avenue to help. Yet today we can talk about the very interesting things that happen in the brain while working to help you understand the frame of mind of the person working on their project and see how to navigate your help so that it suits you both.

The types of things you do with your hands on a project are quite often puzzle-type activities that use no words. The project becomes a type of mental retreat that uses no words. Many people seek this state of mind through mediation, hiking, or other activities, but handiwork can reliably put us in that place while doing something rewarding and useful at home.

So, why does this relate to you? Well, socializing is often a verbal activity and will re-engage that portion of the brain that they just might be wanting to shut off. Not surprisingly, there can be some resentment to disrupting this groove of thought. Just like you wouldn't just walk in and switch the TV channel on them, you may need to be mindful of the inner channel you are interrupting when you come upon the workshop scene.

Another thing that can happen when you enter the workspace in action is that their social sense and word usage may be unavailable. They may have become a temporary hermit while lost in the sweet spot of tenon joints and diagrams. The ability to register the meaning of facial communication, interpersonal space, manners, and words can be left in the hallway, outside the shop.

If you wish to engage, you may need to call in and get their attention and permission to bring them back from the beyond. But beware of what you are requiring in your call. If they took some time to get into that frame of mind, you need to honor the cost of the round-trip ticket back to see you. Perhaps you may need to just wait on it until dinnertime.

As you know from prior columns, there can be differences in people's balance of right and left brained emphasis. This relates to this issue also. Some folks are very word-oriented (*left brained*) and will carry their words into the shop with them. But the puzzle-oriented (*right brained*) person may view this as a sanctuary that has neither demands to explain anything nor any penalties for choosing the wrong words. It could be that they just need to experience this regularly to be in balance. This will help them have the energy to engage the wordy world for the rest of the week. Your honoring this will be a positive space asset in your Home Team.

I love to see the relationship of the brain to the task. Once we gain an understanding of how the inside of our team members works, we can be more considerate of them and also know how to be helpful when they need it. So, with this in mind, if you think your partner needs help on a task, a good way to offer is to ask ahead if they would mind you in the space; then figure out what the rules are. You might suggest that you will be quiet; that the use of words can be looser (no offense taken at wrong words or poor manners). If this sounds silly, it may be, but maybe you need to just leave the space alone. On the other hand, mapping out how you can assist on temporary tasks can help build the practice to spend a little more time together on a project, or to assist reliably in a pinch. Even though this may not seem like your harmony forever-working-along-side ideal, it will be appreciated more than you know.

Best wishes for discovering the best groove for your Home Team!

Dr. Debi

*Dr. Debi Warner is the Founder of Renovation Psychology® and author of **Putting the Home Team to Work**, available now online at RenovationPsychology.com. Dr. Debi provides advice for greater domestic harmony to folks who are renovating their home – for True Home Improvement. This column is offered for enjoyment and enhancement and is not intended to replace your personal medical care. Dr. Debi has a consultation practice, visiting home sites all over New England from her studio in Littleton, NH at the Tannery Marketplace. Photo by Bob Jenks, St. Johnsbury, Vt.*
© 2006 Renovation Psychology® Visit www.RenovationPsychology.com Questions are welcome.