**A Little More Conversation**

I’ve noticed something recently. It was brought to my attention by a participant in one of my recent CPR classes and it’s made me pay attention ever since. How much do people get to know each other face-to-face in today’s world anymore?

A few weeks ago, during a break in our class, I was walking to the cafeteria with a wonderful gal who asked me some very thought provoking questions. “What is the best vacation you’ve ever been on?” “What do you want to do with your life from now on?” “Who’s your most favorite person?” These weren’t the typical how you are, how long have you been teaching CPR questions, etc.

I stopped during our walk and looked at her and said, you ask some great questions. She told me that she loves to make people think and get to know them by asking better questions. “I think it’s wonderful to stimulate good questions and then listen to what people say.”

We simply don’t do that in todays world any more, especially when meeting someone for such a brief time and/or for the first time. So, between me thinking quickly to answer her questions and then asking her what her answers would be to those same questions, we covered our short walk in thought, conversation and closeness.

I’ve been told multiple times of how great my kids are at conversation. My son comes home and always askes; how’s your day? After a simple; it was good from me. He’ll then ask; well, what’d you do? Were there any cool calls on the ambulance? How’d swim practice go with the team? Did you teach spinning class this morning? What’s for dinner? (you knew that one was coming)

Do you think this is odd? That someone doesn’t let the answer, “it was great,” “I’m fine,” and “It’s all good” be the end of the conversation? It’s definitely unique in today’s non-face-to-face world.

I’ve been thinking more about this after playing golf with our women’s league at another course this week. During times of waiting or while we were simply advancing to the next shot, I was asking “get to know you questions” of our opponents. How long have you lived in Colorado, what do you do for a living, do you have any kids, how’s your women’s league, how long have you been playing golf? You know; friendly, get-to-know each other questions. However, they never asked me back. Something that made me say, hmmm (?).

I know that among fellow employees of the multiple places I’ve worked and work, I find that I gravitate towards those who engage in conversation, who start conversation and who include you in their conversation. Don’t you think that it’s nice to be asked every now and again how you are, what you thought of that experience, what plans you might have coming up in the future?

On the flip side and the most important side of this face-to-face conversation is to listen and not to always dominate the conversation. There’s nothing worse, nor nothing that turns me off quicker to a person than when they dominate the conversation without listening, always ‘one-upping’ your experience or story and don’t give you the courteously being part of the conversation.

That’s one of the hardest things that we’ve had to teach our college interns when they come to our facility for their internship; is to start conversation with our members but to mostly listen. Those two factors create a bond between them and that member that is priceless.

I’ve also learned that those who’ve lived prior to the ‘cell-phone’ and ‘electronic’ generation know how to ask questions and how to conversate with others better than our generation. And wow, there’s some great history, knowledge and stories to hear, if you take the time to ask and listen.

My take home message is to do better at conversation. Take the time to ask and then take more time to listen. I’m reminded of this every day, when I visit with class members and I remind myself to ask about their recent vacation or how their kids/grandkids are. You know what happens? Their faces light up and they are happy because someone asked and listened.