

TOSSING, i.e. MORE CONVERSATIONS WORTH HAVING
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In previous issues of TONE magazine, we explored conversations it's not worth having, those that are worth having, and why people have the kind of conversations they do. If you want to read these articles they can be found on our website. With our clients, we often invite them to have a game of catch, tossing a ball back and forth. We like to use this as a metaphor for having a conversation. In any game of tossing the ball, there are many ways to play. You can play competitively, with a winner and a loser, and see if you can make the ball hard to catch, or see who can throw the ball faster or harder. Or you can play cooperatively, and see how long you can keep the game going. In our office, we look for what kind of conversation people are having. When they are playing competitively, they might be trying to prove something or to ask questions that they think they have the answer to. When a person asks a question like "what did I say to you?" and already thinks they know what they said, they are playing competitively.

If you see each conversation you are having as a game of toss, ask yourself some questions about the game:

- What kind of game are you playing, competitive or cooperative?
- What do you do to stop the game?
- How can you keep the game going?

One way to keep the game going is to make invitations or ask questions which you don't know the answer to, invitations or questions which will broaden the conversation and provide new information. Here are some examples of tosses which will keep the game going:

- Tell me more about that.
- What interests you about that?
- How did you experience that?
- Then what happened?
- I'm curious and want to hear more.
- What was the hardest part of that?
- What was the most exciting/interesting/scary/joyful part of that?
- It sounds like you felt (excited, scared, angry, sad, happy, etc.)
- I hear you say (summarize the gist of what you heard with an attitude of curiosity.)

We invite you to have a conversation where you use only tosses that will keep the game going. Practice the art of the toss, an art that cultivates curiosity and deeper intimacy.