It was a beautiful South Florida day – clear skies, light wind. Our older son, who lives in India, was staying with us for a few precious days. As I thought about the fun things I could do with him while he was here, I decided to arrange for us to go sailing. I’d never been on a sail boat and thought it would be a treat for both of us.

This is Pat Iyer with Iyer’s Insights.

I arranged to hire a captain and a sailboat to take my son and me sailing – our first time. I knew the captain from a raw food Meetup group I participate in with my younger son.

The captain took us into a beautiful unspoiled harbor. We were on the only boat in the harbor and had freedom to go where we wanted. Shortly after we left the dock the captain started talking, and talking, and talking.

The captain talked about raw food, organic gardening, the politics of getting sailing jobs, other memorable passengers, having drunk passengers (alcohol and sailing don’t mix well), the harbor’s fish and birds, efforts to control development of the harbor, the history of the harbor, his experiences as a young man in Nepal and Newfoundland…you get the idea.

Rarely did he stop for more than 60 seconds. We heard the sound of the wind in the sails, the waves splashing against the boat, and his voice. He asked us a few questions during the 3 hours, and then immediately returned to his favorite subjects, often more than once.

By the time we were done, my ears were ringing. I craved silence.

**How does being too talkative relate to working with attorneys?**

The importance of listening, not dominating the conversation, and having a dialogue affects your ability to build strong relationships with your clients.
You learn about the attorney’s needs and challenges related to medical issues – ones that you can solve. Asking questions and showing interest in the attorney prevents you from babbling about your services.

You can also talk too much about yourself on your website. Do you demonstrate you understand the attorney’s challenges, called “pain points”? LNC websites commonly have an *About Me* page but rarely have an *About You* page. The About You page is where you ask questions –

- Are you frustrated by mountains of medical records?
- Would it be helpful to you to be able to rely on a summary of medical records?
- Are you concerned your adversary may know more about the plaintiff’s medical records than you do?

These are just a few examples. Your questions are driven by the kind of client you want to attract. As David Kempston pointed out, you were born with two ears and one mouth, so you’d spend more time listening.

This is Pat Iyer, pausing this interview for a moment to relate this podcast to one of my 2 newest books: *How to Create Lasting LNC-Client Relationships*. It is Book 10 of the *Creating a Successful Legal Nurse Consulting Practice Series*. It provides a deep dive into the relationship between legal nurse consultants and their clients. Working with attorneys is challenging and rewarding. Without a steady stream of attorneys who love working with you, your legal nurse consulting business collapses. Does this worry you? It should!

The core of being a successful LNC is being able to effectively work with attorneys.
You can have an aggressive marketing program to bring in new clients, but if you cannot retain them, you’ll be endlessly spinning your wheels. Your clients will stay with you when you understand what they want, how they are wired, and how you can do a great job for them.

When I ran my independent LNC business, some stayed with me for more than 20 years.

*How to Create Lasting LNC-Client Relationships* explains the best way to build a solid client retention program, using strategies that work to identify the desirable clients and avoid the trouble makers.

This is an essential reference for every LNC. Get your copy by going to this podcast’s show notes on podcast.legalnursebusiness.com. You can order this book or any of the others in the series. Use the code Listened to get a 25% discount.

Now let’s return to the show.

**Effective Listening – a Forgotten Skill?**

In Legal Nurse Podcast 288, David Kempston talked about the importance of listening – Is that a forgotten skill? Not for the successful LNCs and attorneys. Most of us aren’t effective listeners, a lack that affects our ability to have positive and productive relationships—at home, at work, and wherever we need good communication.

**What We Say and What We Hear**

As legal nurse consultants, we may think we are listening well. After all, we’ve been trained to communicate well with patients, physicians, and other staff.

As business people, we know how important it is to speak well. Giving a presentation to a group of attorneys is a great marketing opportunity.
But it is not so easy. You’ve heard the number one fear of people is public speaking. Coaches are kept very busy helping people overcome stage fright and to give impressive and informative speeches.

Physicians may have the bias that what they say is more important than what the other staff have to say. We know how well that goes when there is a medical malpractice incident.

**Levels of Listening**

Full listening means paying attention both to someone’s words and to how they’re speaking. It means shedding the layers of distraction and shortened attention spans.

At a lower level, we may be listening but not fully connecting to nonverbal cues and body language. When we do this, we miss out on a lot of useful information.

The lowest level occurs when we pretend to listen but are paying attention to our internal thoughts and concerns. We are secretly waiting for our chance to speak. Those who are speaking to us often recognize this kind of restless impatience.

**The Qualities of Full Listening**

Listen and look for cues that the speaker might be nervous, angry, or upset in some other way. A committed listener is familiar with the many messages people unconsciously give through body language. Indications of unease might suggest the need to find out, in a friendly and supportive way, what’s really going on.

Wait until the speaker has finished what he wants to say before responding. (I hate to be interrupted.)

Pausing to consider what the speaker has said will heighten the sense that you’ve listened carefully.
Then ask questions that further the dialogue. Express support for what the other person is saying. Create an atmosphere of cooperation, which further encourages the other speaker to express him- or herself.

Even if you don’t agree with all the speaker is saying, you can expect your constructive feedback to be seriously considered.

**Clear the Roadblocks to Full Listening**

Full listening has certain prerequisites. Make sure you have all electronic devices shut off. You want a complete absence of distractions. And no sly looks at your cell phone.

When you’re scheduling a meeting with someone, whether it’s the employee with a grievance or your teenage son who’s announced that he wants to quit high school, allow plenty of time. If you say, “We have ten minutes to talk,” you’re virtually assuring a failed communication.

More important, before going into a discussion with someone else, check yourself to understand how you feel about the upcoming conversation.

If you’re nervous, ask yourself why. If you feel combative, remind yourself that arguments don’t generally solve problems. If you find yourself thinking, “I’m going to convince X that I’m right,” recognize that this attitude won’t lead to an effective communication.

You may struggle with some of these issues. Remember that you’re developing a new skill. The more you practice it, the better you’ll get, and your relationships will greatly improve.

Be sure to get a copy of my new book, *How to Create Lasting LNC-Client Relationships*. This book focuses on what really counts as an LNC - having strong relationships with your clients drives your success. Working with attorneys is challenging and rewarding. You can have an aggressive marketing program to bring in new clients, but if you cannot retain them, you’ll be endlessly spinning.
your wheels. Go to the show notes for this show at podcast.legalnursebusiness.com.

I’ve got a phenomenal resource for you just waiting on LegalNurseBusiness.com. My online training and books are designed to help LNCs discover ways to strengthen their skills and businesses. Check them out at legalnursebusiness.com.

Many of us are lifelong learners who enjoy the chance to keep expanding our knowledge. Just like the book of the month clubs, LNCEU.com gives you two online trainings every month. We have a yearly payment plan that saves you over $50 compared to paying monthly, and each program is hugely discounted. Look at the options at LNCEU.com.

The LNCAcademy.com is the coaching program I offer to a select number of LNCs. You get my personal attention and mentorship so that you can excel and build a solid foundation for your LNC practice. Get all the details at LNCAcademy.com.