

LIVING IN HARMONY

PART ONE

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

What is domestic violence?
How am I/How have I been abusive?
Emergency and long-lasting tools
How does substance abuse impact domestic violence

PART TWO

WHAT ARE EMOTIONS AND HOW DO I DEAL WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY?

What is anger?
What are emotions for?
Defenses-what they do for us/how we use them/how they can hurt us

PART THREE

WHERE WE CAME FROM/WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

Family of origin

PART FOUR

Self-Esteem and Self-Talk
How to develop and maintain healthy self-esteem

PART FIVE

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS-HOW TO MAKE AND KEEP ONE

What is a healthy relationship?
Communication
Intimacy/Sexuality
Bottom lines
Conflict resolution

PART Six

Boundaries-what are they
What is their value
How to develop them

Part Seven

Communication
How to develop healthy communication

Part Eight

Assertiveness

**Understanding, developing and maintaining positive assertion
Understanding the difference between assertion, aggression, and
passive-aggressiveness**

Part Nine

Conflict Management

How to handle conflicts in a healthy manner

Part Ten

EMPATHY

The power of empathy

How empathy is impacted by domestic violence

PART Eleven

The impact of domestic violence on children

How to help children deal with and heal from domestic violence

Part Twelve

RELAPSE PREVENTION

How to keep violence and abuse from happening again

LIVING IN HARMONY

PART ONE

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- It is violence or the threat of violence
- It is violence against a spouse, former spouse, cohabitants or former cohabitants
- It is the willful or unlawful use of physical force
- Domestic violence does not have to include an injury
- Domestic violence is used to exert power and control over another person
- It is placing another person in apprehension of imminent serious danger
- Batterers come from all social, economic groups
- Males who batter may have some of the following characteristics:
 1. Be overly jealous, possessive or demanding
 2. Have an inability to express feelings and become easily frustrated when trying to express feelings
 3. May have suffered some abuse in their childhood or been exposed to abuse and violence in their homes
 4. Have difficulty handling stress
 5. May tend to be impulsive
 6. May experience surges of anger that are uncontrollable
 7. May be using drugs or alcohol
 8. May have suffered a head injury
 9. May suffer from depression

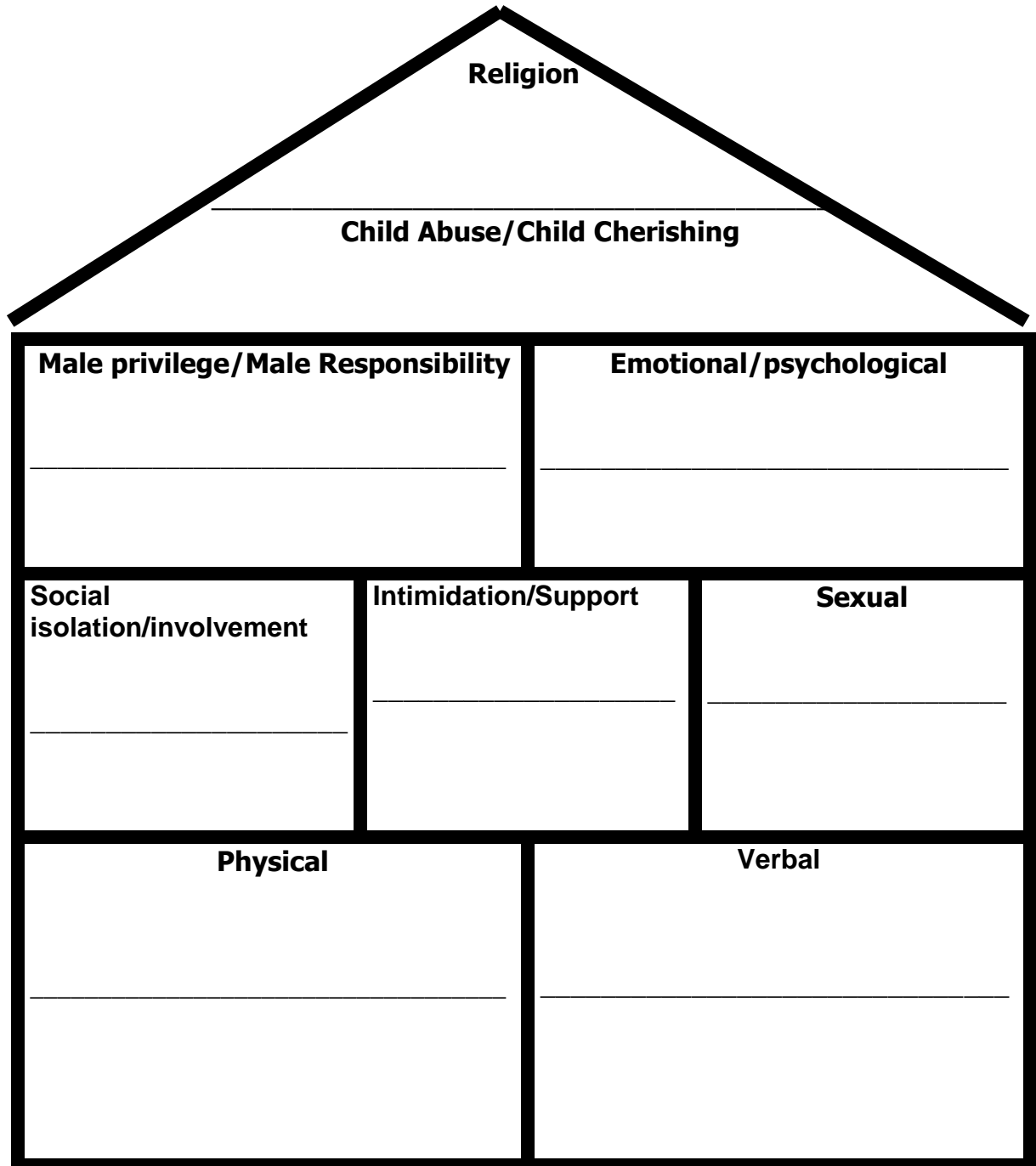
Please watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/TxurfmCCHGk>

Looking at the above, which ones apply to you? Please list them and how you think they have impacted your relationships?

We are going to look at the HOUSE OF ABUSE/HOUSE OF RESPECT. The first part of this exercise is to list behaviors that fit the label of each room. This will be done for both the House of Abuse and the House of Responsibility. For the final part of the exercise, please discuss the rooms that have been active-both in your family of origin and in your relationships. The purpose of this is to begin to discover what you learned about relationships in your family of origin, how you are repeating patterns, and to highlight what you want to work on changing.

KOONIN HOUSE OF ABUSE/HOUSE OF RESPONSIBILITY



Adapted from Wilder: Koonin House of Abuse/Responsibility

HOUSE OF ABUSE/HOUSE OF RESPONSIBILITY EXERCISE

1. In my relationship my abusive behaviors are/have been:

2. In my family of origin, I observed the following abusive behaviors-also please list who was the perpetrator and who was the victim.

3. What were your reactions to seeing/hearing this kind of behavior?

4. I want to change the following behaviors.

5. Four specific actions that I can take right now to help myself are:

6. My triggers for my abusive behaviors are:

CYCLE OF ABUSE

Source: Lenore Walker

Many couples experience a distinct cycle of violence in their relationships. The cycle has three phases.

Phase One: The Tension Building Stage.

In this stage, there is tension that may be a result of constant arguing, silent treatments, and unresolved problems. Sometimes there is violence. This stage can last anywhere from days to years. Partners are usually aware that the tension is building, but don't deal with it. This may be because there has been violence before, and the victim is afraid of what might happen if problems are brought into the open. It may also be due to a lack of skills for dealing with issues in relationships. The woman will attempt to control the environment as a way of eliminating violent outbursts. The outcome of this is a build-up of tension which can lead to an explosion.

Tension Building Stage

His behavior	Her behavior
Moody	Attempts to calm him
Nitpicking	Nurturing
Isolates her	Is silent or talkative
Withdraws affection	Stays away from family, friends
Puts her down	Agrees, agrees
Yelling	Withdraws
Uses alcohol or drugs	Keeps kids quiet
Threatens	Withdraws
Destroys property	Makes attempts to reason with him
Criticizes	Pleases him
Becomes sullen	May become critical or nag
Is crazy making	Feels and may act crazy

Phase Two: The Acute Battering Stage

This is the stage that gets attention-from police, authorities, and even newspapers. This is where the violence happens. This stage is shorter than the tension building stage and requires a lot of energy. It stops because of police being called, one partner leaving, someone else intervening. The violence can come from both partners because of the victim hitting back or retaliating.

His behavior	Her behavior
Hitting	Protects herself any way she can
Choking	Calls police, screams
Humiliation	Attempts to calm him
Imprisonment	Attempts to reason with him
Rape	Gives in
Use of weapons	Attempts to protect herself
Beating	Leaves him
Verbal abuse	Fights back

Phase Three: The Honeymoon Stage

During this stage, the man is usually contrite. He feels very bad for what has happened. The woman may also blame herself for provoking him. Both want to believe that this will never happen again. There may be a lot of passion and good sex in this stage. This is often the time when the woman feels the strongest love from her partner.

His behavior	Her behavior
Begs for forgiveness	Forgives, agrees to stay
Promises to get counseling, go for help	Sets up counseling appointments
Declares it will never happen again	Feels happy and hopeful
Wants to make love	
Declares love	Feels anxious, afraid, angry
Enlists family support	Afraid to show emotions

In each of these stages, both partners are using denial in order to deal with the cycle. The denial must be broken before the cycle can be stopped.

There are three important characteristics of this cycle.

1. The longer the cycle exists in a relationship, the more it increases in frequency.
2. The longer the cycle goes uninterrupted, the worse the violence gets.
3. The longer the cycle goes uninterrupted, the shorter the third stage becomes.

When this cycle exists in a relationship, trust is destroyed. Once trust is destroyed in a relationship, it can be very difficult to rebuild.

How has the pattern of abuse existed in your relationship? What have been your behaviors? What have been your partner's behaviors?

What do you need to do to make a change in this pattern? How can you help your partner regain trust in you?

Did you see this pattern in the family you grew up in? What happened? Did it ever stop or is it still going on?

What damage has living with this pattern done to your relationship?

Please watch these videos:

https://youtu.be/B2h_PO9subA

<https://youtu.be/IL-8C12lsu0>

CHEMICAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Research shows that a large percentage of men who batter use alcohol or other drugs to excess. Some of the reasons for this are: a person is less inhibited when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, therefore they may be less inhibited to do things that would not be done if sober; feelings and behaviors are acted out more quickly when under the influence of alcohol/drugs. However, it must be clearly recognized that **ALCOHOL OR DRUGS DO NOT CAUSE VIOLENCE AND CANNOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR VIOLENCE.**

Some of the consequences of using drugs or alcohol for a long period of time are:

- Becoming addicted, either physically or psychologically
- Causing physical damage to one's mind and/or body
- Compromising of one's values
- Covering up feelings
- Running away from feelings
- Creating family and/or work problems
- Creating problems with the law
- Death

Alcohol is a depressant and as such, a person under the influence of alcohol is less in control of their behavior. In addition, many people are less aware of their emotional state when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

COMMON REASONS FOR USING CHEMICALS-check off the ones that apply to you

Please check those that apply to you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To relax | <input type="checkbox"/> To feel more relaxed about having sex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To fit in with the crowd | <input type="checkbox"/> To stuff feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peer pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To better relate to friends or family | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid friends or family | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid feeling depressed | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid an argument | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To escape problems at home | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To feel better about yourself | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To feel better about others | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid feeling lonely | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To feel like you belong in a group | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To have fun | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To get high | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To get drunk | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To go to sleep | |

Have substances been involved in the abusive aspects of your relationship? If so, please give some information on this.

Do you feel that you have a problem with substance abuse? If so, what are you now doing or are going to do about it? What do you need to start getting help with dealing with the problems?

Do you feel that your partner has a problem with substance abuse? If so, what does that mean for the future of your relationship?

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY EXERCISE

1. Do you occasionally use heavily after a disappointment, a quarrel, or when your superiors give you a hard time?
2. When you have trouble or feel under pressure, do you use more than usual?
3. Have you noticed that you are able to handle more alcohol or drugs than you did when you were first using?
4. Do you ever wake up on the "morning after" and discover that you could not remember part of the evening before, even though your friends tell you that you did not "pass out"?
5. When using with other people, do you try to have a little more when others will not know it?
6. Are there certain occasions when you feel uncomfortable if alcohol or drugs are not available?
7. Have you recently noticed that when you being using, you are in more of a hurry to get the first hit than you used to be?
8. Do you sometimes feel guilty about your use?
9. Are you secretly irritated when you family or friends discuss your use of alcohol/drugs?
10. Have you recently noticed an increase in the frequency of your memory "blackouts"?
11. Do you often find that you wish to continue using after your friends say they have had enough?
12. Do you usually have a reason for the occasions when you use heavily?
13. When you are sober, do you often regret things you have said or done?

14. Have you tried switching drugs or following different plans for controlling or cutting down on your use?
15. Have you often failed to keep the promises you have made to yourself about controlling or cutting down on your use?
16. Have you ever tried to control your use by making a change in your jobs, or moving to a new location?
17. Do you try to avoid family or close friends when you are using?
18. Are you having an increasing number of financial and/or work problems?
19. Do more people seem to be treating you unfairly without good reason?
20. Do you eat very little or irregularly when you are using?
21. Do you sometimes have the "shakes" in the morning and find that it helps to have a drink or a hit?
22. Have you recently noticed that you cannot use as much as you once did?
23. Do you sometimes stay drunk or high for several days at a time?
24. Do you sometimes feel very depressed and wonder whether life is worth living?
25. Sometimes after periods of using, do you see or hear things that aren't there?
26. Do you get terribly frightened after you have been using heavily?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you have some of the symptoms that may indicate alcohol or drug abuse.

Please watch these videos: https://youtu.be/-Zgm40_2ESw

<https://youtu.be/p2Lmk9H54oc>

SELF-CONTROL PLAN

The purpose of this exercise is to develop a plan for maintaining self-control so that violence will not occur in your relationship. The more we know about ourselves, the more able we are to control our responses to difficult situations. Use the following to develop your own plan for maintaining control and minimizing the potential for violence to occur.

Cues of escalation before violence:

Even though many of us think that our violent behavior happens immediately, the reality is that we all have many hints when things are going wrong. The earlier we can spot those hints, the more control we will have over our responses.

Situations:

List as many situations as possible where you will have an immediate, angry response. Don't worry if they seem rational or silly, that doesn't matter. What is important is for you to be aware of those situations where your control is easily or quickly lost. Be as specific as possible about these situations, times, places, persons, etc.

1. _____
- _____
- _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Red flag words/phrases: List words or phrases that you and your partner have a strong negative response to.

Mine	My partners

Physical changes: List things that happen to your body when you are angry. The earlier the recognition of the change, the stronger the possibility of being able to manage the anger.

Negative self-talk: What kinds of things do you say to yourself when you are angry in order to keep the anger going? List as many of those as possible.

Mental imagery: Do you have any fantasies that come up when you are angry? If so, write them down here.

Time-Outs

Learning to take time-outs is an important lesson of this program. It is a skill that should be used and respected by both members of a relationship in order for it to work best. However, one person can still use TIME OUTS effectively even if the partner does not follow along. Time-outs provide time to calm down, to focus on what one wants from the situation at hand, and to decide how to best and most effectively make that happen.

Time-outs are difficult to do. Why? Because most of us want to resolve an issue when it arises. Many of us (especially men) were taught to believe that only a coward/weakling backs down from a confrontation. In conflicts, our first impulse is often to get things resolved as soon as possible.

The problem with this method is that the temptation to “win” the argument often overrides the threat of harming the relationship. The original problem is often left unresolved while each person may be left with hurt feelings. The other danger (which may be the reason you are here in this program) is that angry words often lead to violent actions when you are unwilling to control your words, feelings, and body. The problem that was so important at the beginning of the argument probably seems miniscule after being arrested or having your partner walk out on you for verbally abusing her. If you truly value your relationship, you must act accordingly. By taking the time to collect yourself and your thoughts, you are in essence, demonstrating your respect for your partner, your relationship, and yourself. If your fear is that your partner will not be there when you get back, then the trust level of your relationship should be addressed at an appropriate time. When trust is low, it is difficult to believe that your partner will stick it through to get issues resolved. However, lashing out in anger is not a way to build this trust.

As time-outs are practiced and each partner puts his/her share of effort into working through issues, trust levels will build naturally and both members of the relationship will feel safer and more secure. However, it is important to remember that even if one partner does not follow through, time-outs can still be beneficial because the acting partner is learning self-control while also getting information about the relationship that will help determine if it is worth staying in.

One frequent problem with taking time-outs is the tendency to use alcohol/drugs during the time-out as a way of dealing with the pain and loneliness, and to numb the uncomfortable feelings. Remember, taking time-outs may be difficult at the beginning, but it gets easier with time and works better and more effectively the more often it is used.

It is suggested that you practice time-outs before you use them in earnest. Think about what you will do and where you will go when you take one. Learn to monitor yourself so that you will be aware of when you need to take one. This self-practice gives you confidence in implementing them effectively. Even if you can't practice with a partner, practice by yourself so you will know what you need to do.

Make sure that you don't use time-outs as a way of putting off or avoiding dealing with uncomfortable situations in your relationship. Unresolved problems don't go away -- they simply simmer and get bigger if they are not dealt with.

Taking a Time-Out

Step 1.

Whenever you feel your anger or your partner's anger rising uncontrollably, you feel your body getting tense, or when you feel frustrated/out of control, say out loud to yourself and to your partner: (these are examples, find or create one that work for you)

"I'm beginning to feel angry/uncomfortable." I need to take a time-out."

"I truly value what you have to say, however I need some time to collect myself so that I can give you my full attention, which is what you deserve."

"Because I value our relationship and don't want to hurt the trust we have gained, I'd like to ask you to give me some time to digest what we've said and pick up the conversation later _____ (fill in when)"

"We have been working really hard on our communication and I really want to understand you, but right now I'm feeling overwhelmed and need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to think over what we've said to one another."

"I'm starting to feel upset, which makes it hard for me to listen effectively. I need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to refocus myself and listen attentively to you."

It is very important to focus on your feelings and not on your observations of your partner's feelings. This puts you in charge of yourself and gives you a sense of being able to work on a resolution to the situation. You are communicating how you feel clearly and directly. You are taking responsibility for your emotions and not making them the responsibility of your partner. Acknowledging an uncomfortable feeling may help you begin to develop control over it.

Step 2.

Leave the premises. If you have discussed this with your partner previously, you will have set a time length to allow yourself to calm down. Remember: It is imperative that you use this time to do something that will get rid of the tension in your body. Exercise can be very beneficial. Do not use this time as an opportunity to become

angrier, to think about the bad things your partner has done to you, or how you can get even. You want to calm down, not agitate yourself more during this time.

Step 3:

If you have made a commitment to come back at an agreed upon time, do it. This shows caring for the well-being of your relationship and helps develop trust. In the event that you are still angry and do not trust yourself if you come back, contact your partner and explain this, giving another time when you will most likely be back. This behavior shows both you and your partner that you are not avoiding the issue and want to resolve the problem. When you return to the situation, check in with your partner. Find out if he is ready to discuss the problem. If not, don't push it, but ask him to let you know when he is ready. If your angry feelings start to rise again, start over with another time-out.

Step 4:

This is when you and your partner address the issue. Talking about what your anger is about helps develop skills in discussing difficult situations.

Couples may find that some topics are too emotionally charged to discuss. If that happens, consider getting professional help to resolve the situation in a mutually acceptable way.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What has happened when you have attempted to use time-outs in your relationship?

How have time-outs worked in your relationship? Do you think they have helped or hurt your relationship? How?

What changes do you need to make in how you take time-outs?

How can you help your partner be more effective in taking time-outs?

What is the most difficult thing for you about time-outs?

Time-Out Contract

When I realize that my anger is rising, or if I feel that my partner's anger is rising to an uncomfortable level, I will give an agreed upon signal for a time out. In taking the time out, I will not get in a "last shot" or do any provoking behavior.

I will return or contact my partner at the agreed upon time.

I will use the time away to calm myself down and think of possible resolutions to the problem. I will not drink or use drugs while away.

When I return, I will check with my partner to see if he wants to discuss the problem. If not, I will not pursue the issue, but will ask him to tell me in a reasonable time when he will be ready and willing to discuss it.

I will acknowledge my share of responsibility for the problem and state my commitment to finding a mutually acceptable resolution.

If my partner gives a time-out signal and leaves, I will respect that and let my partner go without further argument. I will not drink or use drugs while my partner is away. When my partner returns, I will let him/her know if I am ready to discuss the problem and work towards a resolution.

Date_____Signature_____

Date_____Signature_____

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

We are all 100% responsible for all of the actions in our lives.

This 100% responsibility rule means that we must learn to take responsibility for what happens in our lives. We are the **OWNERS** of our lives. Taking responsibility means that we can no longer blame anyone else for what is going on in our life, for anything that we have been doing, feeling, or for any situations that we are in.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult and important things that will come out of this program. Learning to take responsibility for our lives is both demanding and freeing. When we let others "make" us do something, we give them a tremendous amount of power and control in our life. They decide what we feel, who we are, and what we want in our life. Is that how you want to live?

You create what goes on in your head and in your life. You are responsible for the outcome of all interactions. If you don't like what is going on in your life, how people are treating you, or where you are financially, physically, or emotionally, you are the only one who can make the necessary changes. Don't wait until someone else "gets it", or "understands" or "feels better". Those things have absolutely nothing to do with you!!

IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH HOW PEOPLE ARE TREATING YOU, ONLY YOU CAN MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS IN YOUR BEHAVIOR FOR THE OUTCOME TO CHANGE. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU WANT. IF THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL FOR YOU IN ANY RELATIONSHIP, IT IS IN YOUR INTEREST, NOT THE OTHER PERSON'S, THAT THINGS CHANGE, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THAT CHANGE.

Let's say you make the decision to take charge, you make changes, and then nothing happens. What do you do next? Do something different!! Remember: **IF ONE STRATEGY DOESN'T WORK TO MEET YOUR NEEDS OR SOLVE A PROBLEM, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO POINT IN PLACING BLAME ON OTHERS.** It's your responsibility to keep using new strategies for change until something finally works. Don't give up – it may take some time to make changes, and it may be frustrating. That's OK. Remember, it took a long time to get you where you are now, and it will take some time to fully learn the skill of 100% self-responsibility.

The question to ask is not, "Who can I blame for how I feel and where I am in my life?" but rather, "What can I do to make the changes necessary to make my life better?"

You have to learn that you can't expect others to change or to be different. The only time others will be different is when *you* are different, and they have to respond to you in a different way if they want to stay in your life. It all comes from you.

Remember-others are doing the best they can, even if it doesn't work for you. Concentrate on yourself and not on others.

THE OTHER PERSON WILL ONLY CHANGE WITH THE PERCEPTION THAT NEW BEHAVIOR IS IN HIS/HER BEST INTEREST.

When you follow this principle be prepared to lose some people in your life. There may be people in your life that don't want you to change and who will leave when you make changes. This may be difficult and painful to deal with but remember; sometimes we have to clean out our lives in order to make room for new and healthier relationships and experiences.

All people in relationships inevitably come to two basic choices – they either adapt or let go. If your needs in any relationship don't get met or recognized or if the relationship is far more painful than it is satisfying, then you may need to look at why you are staying in the relationship. Decide on how long you are going to wait for changes to happen. If they don't happen in that time framework, then you need to look at making other choices. The alternative to this is to suffer chronic anger and/or depression, and you know where those emotions get you.

HELPFUL SELF-TALK TO MAINTAIN SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

The following statements may be helpful to you as you work on mastering self-responsibility.

1. I am responsible for what happens between us.
2. No point in blaming, use a new strategy.
3. What can I do about this?
4. The amount of help, support, and nourishment I am now getting is all I can get, given the strategies I am using.
5. People won't change unless I make it in their interest.
6. How can I reinforce him or her to change in this situation?
7. I may not like it, but he or she is using the best problem solving strategy available right now.
8. Everyone is responsible for taking care of his or her own needs.
9. What are my expectations in this particular relationship?
10. My choice is to adapt or let go.
11. Only children are victims, I always have a choice.

Wrap-up of Part One

1. What has been the most important thing that you have learned about yourself in the parts of this section?

2. What have you learned or understood about your relationship as a result of this section?

3. Have you noticed any changes in your relationships –friends, job, children, or intimate relationship? If so what?

4. What was the most difficult part of this section for you? Why?

5. What area of change do you need to work most on right now? Why?

6. What goals have you developed for your self as a result of this section?

Part 1: Questions

1. Which of the following is not true. Domestic violence is

It is violence or the threat of violence

It is violence against a spouse, former spouse, cohabitants or former cohabitants

It is the willful or unlawful use of physical force

Domestic violence does not have to include an injury

Domestic violence is used to exert power and control over another person

It is placing another person in apprehension of imminent serious danger

Batterers come from all social, economic groups All are true

2. The use of alcohol and drugs has no impact on domestic violence. F

3. The cycle of abuse has 4 phases F

4. The longer the cycle of abuse exists in a relationship, the more frequent it gets. T

5. In the honeymoon stage of the cycle of abuse, the victim is begging for forgiveness. F

6. Abusers and victims often come from homes where there has been physical abuse. T

7. Using alcohol/drugs to understand your feelings is a good idea. F
8. Alcohol is a depressant and as such, a person under the influence of alcohol is less in control of their behavior. T
9. When developing a self-control plan, the more information about yourself and your triggers you have, the better the plan. T
11. Even though many of us think that our violent behavior happens immediately, the reality is that we all have many hints when things are going wrong. The earlier we can spot those hints, the more control we will have over our responses. T
12. Time-outs do not need to be understood by both members of the relationship in order to work. F
13. Time outs need to be practiced at times when things are going well in the relationship. T
14. A time out means that a problem will be dealt with when both partners are calm and able to discuss without becoming violent. T
15. Taking responsibility means that we can no longer blame anyone else for what is going on in our life, for anything that we have been doing, feeling, or for any situations that we are in. T
16. It is ok to expect others to change so that things can get better. F
17. Other people make you angry. F
18. My reactions to events are choices. T
19. The only time others will be different is when *you* are different, and they have to respond to you in a different way if they want to stay in your life. It all comes from you. T
20. I am responsible for meeting the needs of my partner. F

PART TWO

WHAT ARE FEELINGS AND HOW DO I DEAL WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY?

Feelings

What are feelings? Feelings are the energies that move us in response to our thoughts and experiences. All feelings are neutral—we attach meanings to them based on our experiences, belief, and value systems. Our feelings about any event tell us about the **value** of that experience to us.

Many of the feelings that we have today are expressions that we learned early in life. We learned to attach meanings of happy, sad, safe, angry, and so on by the experiences we had as children. Events, places, things that we react to with anger, happiness, fear, shame, etc. are usually associated with experiences we have had in our early formative years. Something that one person may react to with feelings of

excitement and joy may be something that another person will react to with fear and dread.

Feelings are expressions of what we perceive is going on in our world. We choose our feelings based on our prior experiences. Many of us have to unlearn some of our early associations when we become adults because those associations are unhealthy or unsafe.

Sometimes we get stuck in a feeling. This "stuckness" tends to be with the more unpleasant emotions, like anger and depression. When one is "stuck" in anger or depression, their whole experience of the world is seen through that emotion. If the feeling is depression, the world may be seen as uninviting, not fun, and not friendly. If the feeling is anger, the world may be seen as unsafe, threatening, and hostile.

In addition, our feelings are tied to our value systems. When individuals in relationships have different value systems, they often have different and even conflicting emotions about the same experiences.

There are many words that are used to describe feelings: elated, sad, frustrated, frightened, angry, happy, depressed—all of these describe inner emotional responses. Some words describe degrees of feelings: for example, "irritated" may mean just a little angry and "outraged" may mean a lot angry. Often, words combine different feelings: for example, "upset" may mean angry and hurt. There may be times when we have a mixture of feelings and we may not know how to sort them out.

When we have an emotional response to something, we are evaluating its meaning to us. Some of us are trained from an early age to make these evaluations by using only rational means (i.e., thinking). Something happens and the pluses and minuses of that something are added up. Then a judgment is made of what that "something" means.

When this is happening, feelings are confused with thinking or observation. Feelings are an expression of what is going on inside of you, thinking and observing are expressions of how you think things fit together. Feelings are not always rational and do not always follow the expected. Many of our current feelings come from past experiences, are a result of good and bad times, and sometimes don't have anything to do with what is going on in the present.

An example of an "**I feel-thinking**" response would be:

"I feel it was unfair"

To change this to an "**I feel-emotion**" response:

"I feel hurt that you spent all of the money that way."

Remember, the purpose of expressing feelings is to communicate to ourselves and to others how we experience and are affected by the events in our lives.

There are four basic feelings: Sadness, happiness, fear, and anger.

Each of these feelings has a wide array of expressions, from the least to the most profound. List under each feeling some words that are used to describe that feeling.

Sad	Happy	Fearful	Anger

Now look at the list and see how many of the descriptions can fit more than one category. See how confusing it can be to figure out what emotion you are really feeling?

We often use feelings to manipulate others. What are some of the ways that you have manipulated others?

Some of us are uncomfortable with emotions. We have the mistaken belief that if we don't feel, we won't hurt. Fear and sadness can be difficult to experience for some. Most of us don't want to "feel bad". So, we avoid those "bad" feelings. What we tend to forget, or perhaps don't even know, is that feelings that we don't acknowledge don't go away-they just lie dormant (like being asleep) and wait until there is a weak moment and they can then reappear. In addition, these unaddressed feelings collect "interest"-like money in a bank and become bigger than they were when they first appeared. So, when they come back up again, they are often large and even often feel "uncontrollable".

Also, please remember: You may experience the same level of joy and happiness that you allow yourself to experience sadness. When you cut yourself off from one emotion, you also cut yourself off from the other emotions.

Do you experience a full range of emotions or do you cut yourself off? The decision is up to you. What does your emotional range look like?

Like this?

Happy_____Sad

Or like this?

Happy_____Sad

What does your partner's emotional range look like? Are there clashes between you and your partner with the way you experience emotions? When we live with a person who has a much different emotional range than we do, we may experience difficulties in attempting to share emotions with each other or to understand each other.

It is also important to understand that we will only feel as much happiness as we allow ourselves to feel sadness. When we avoid uncomfortable or painful emotions, we also cut ourselves off from pleasant emotions. When negative feelings are repressed, joyful feelings tend to not be available. Talking out feelings leads to an opportunity of being closer to one another.

Another thing that happens with these uncomfortable emotions is that we are spending a lot of time in keeping them "down" or controlled. To do this, we often have to be very aware of our surroundings and of everything that is going on all the time. We may start to "arrange" things to make sure that life goes on in a certain manner so that uncomfortable things don't happen. This usually results in our being called "controlling" or a "control freak." Sound familiar?

People who are controlling are usually those people who feel very unsafe. They often feel that their feelings are not valid and that their lives revolve around a person/persons/situation(s) that are out of control. They are often blamed for all that goes wrong and so they learn to "fix" this by arranging and managing what is happening around them. They are often afraid to even look at their own feelings and so they deny their feelings and pay attention to the feelings of others.

This makes it difficult, if not impossible to be spontaneous in anything, it makes closeness with others unlikely to happen, and it is emotionally exhausting. This controlling behavior blocks feeling, blocks facing reality, causes tenseness in relationships, and keeps the individual from freely giving and receiving love. Controlling is a sign of distress-that things are not okay in our life, and that the real feelings are not being addressed.

What are the most uncomfortable emotions for you to feel? What do you do with them? How do you avoid them?

What emotions were allowed to be expressed in your family of origin? How were they expressed? How does that differ from how your partner learned to express emotions?

When individuals in a relationship come from backgrounds where they learned very different things about emotions, how to express them, what was okay and not okay to express, the relationship can develop problems. Partner A may feel that Partner B is "unfeeling" while Partner B may feel that Partner A is "out of control".

In your relationship, who is the most comfortable one in expressing emotions? Do you know why?

Take some time and fill out the following log as honestly as possible:

Emotion	I do the following when I feel this way:	My body feels like:	Situations that lead to this emotion	What I would really like to do/feel:
Hurt				
Love				
Sadness				
Fear				
Rejection				
Joy				
Anger				
Loneliness				

In healthy relationships, there is a positive exchange of emotions of all kinds. All members of the relationships feel safe and secure in expressing what they are feeling—when they are feeling it. Others may not always agree with what a person is feeling, however, in healthy relationships, all feelings are respected and not made fun of or used against the other.

It is important to assess how safe one’s relationship is, and to decide to stay or go based on how safe it is to express a wide variety of emotions. If a person stays in relationships where their emotions are ignored or ridiculed, there is a high likelihood of anger building up and spilling over into the relationship. This is when abuse and violence are more likely to happen.

Look at the chart below and use it to assess your own relationship. What patterns do you see? What changes do you need to make in your life? How do you plan on making those changes?

Emotion	Who was involved	Describe situation	Describe outcome
Annoyed			
Bored			
Warm and cared for			
Guilty			
Sad			
Hesitant/fearful			
Happy/joyful			
Excited/anticipating			
Energetic/ambitious			
Powerful			
Misunderstood/rejected			
Embarrassed/shamed			
Lonely/isolated			

Use this space to jot down the answers to the above questions.

Let's look at anger. Anger used ineffectively or too long, causes severe damage to all kinds of relationships. What can be done about unhealthy anger?

1. Realize that anger is a normal response to something happening in your life. On-going anger may be a response to unresolved frustration and/or emotional distress.
2. Anger is not wrong-it is what one does with or about their anger that creates healthy or unhealthy situations.
3. Repressed anger can cause problems in all areas of life-health, personal, professional, and legal. Rather than repress anger, learn to admit anger.
4. Learn to use the energy of anger in a responsible and effective manner.
5. Instead of running away from anger, stay and confront it.
6. Use anger to improve rather than destroy relationships.
7. Let go of the need for revenge.
8. Work on owning your own feelings instead of projecting them onto others.
9. Take time to look at all of the perspectives of a situation-this may help you let go of anger.

Our anger belongs to us!! No one else can "make" us angry. Anger, like any other emotion, is a choice. The only person who decides if you are angry or not is you! Only you can decide to stuff it, escalate it, or direct it.

What are your body signals to anger? List at least four changes you notice when you are becoming angry.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What are your angry behaviors? List four positive ones and four negative ones.

Positive	Negative

Please list at least four situations that seem to set your anger off.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Look at the SPECTRUM FOR THE EXPRESSION OF ANGER

ANNOYANCE	IRRITATION	ANGER	RAGE	FURY
A	B	C	D	E

Annoyance is felt when the distress is slight. It is short lasting and relatively to work through.

Irritation indicates that the excitation is building up in the muscles, not yet to the point of exploding in aggressive action. With irritation, the time to resolve and calm down is longer than annoyance.

Anger is a response to pain. Pain denotes that the excitation in the muscular system has reached a boiling point. In these situations, control is decided on a conscious level- an individual is still in control of their actions and makes the decision of what level of response is needed.

Rage is a reaction to severe pain. Self-control is lessening. Rage has the potential to be destructive.

Fury is a level of feeling where there is no self-control and no ability to be reasoned with by others.

It is important to know where we "live" on an everyday basis on the above spectrum. It is much easier to get to rage or fury if you are at anger than if you are at annoyance. When we hold on to anger from previous situations, we "live" at higher levels of anger arousal and it is easier to become more aroused by even relatively simple situations.

Answer the following questions.

1. Where are you most of the time on the spectrum scale?

2. List three situations for each of the levels on the spectrum.

3. How do you know when you are angry? (what happens in your body, what are you thinking, what other emotions are your feelings)

4. What do you do when you are angry?

5. What are the negative and positive consequences of your anger?

6. Are you afraid of your anger? If yes, why?

7. Do you use anger as a tool for controlling people or situations? If yes, how?

8. Where did you learn your anger responses?

9. Please discuss a time when your anger caused harm or pain to someone you love.

DEFENSES

Defenses are mechanisms we use to avoid uncomfortable feelings. To avoid painful feelings. To avoid looking at the parts of ourselves that we need to change, and sometimes to avoid looking at our relationships with others in a clear way. Many of us are afraid of change and we avoid facing the need for change by using our defenses. Unfortunately, the end result is often more chaos and problems.

Look at the list of defenses below and check off the ones you use.

	Anger		Can't remember
	Dismissing		Depression
	Distancing		Rationalizing
	Sarcasm		Intellectualizing
	Defiance		Passive/aggressive behavior
	Detachment		Compliance
	Denial		Resentment/rage
	Avoidance		Fantasy
	Blame		Suppression
	Judge		Disassociation
	Victim		Insulation
	Martyr		Grandiosity
	Pretend		Shame
	Weeping		Silence
	Laughing		Compensation
	Smiling		Rage
	Fainting		Talkative
	Projection		Sad
	Shutdown		Pain

1. What feelings do you avoid by using these defenses?

2. What situations are most difficult for you and you find that you are using these defenses more often?

3. What defenses does your partner use?

4. What problems have been caused by you being defensive?

5. What are your fears about what will happen (how others will think of you? if you will look or feel vulnerable, experience loss of prestige, power, relationships, etc.) if you let your defenses down?

6. How do you think your relationship would change if you let your defenses down? If your partner let her defenses down?

Please watch these videos: <https://youtu.be/63kOVJnlZfM>
<https://youtu.be/b197XOd9S7U>
<https://youtu.be/Bd6XjU7Q5ow>

REVIEW SHEET

1. List three things you learned about your emotions in this section.

2. What do you need to do to be more in touch with your emotions?

3. What are the healthy aspects of your anger and what are the unhealthy aspects of your anger?

4. How can you recognize when you are using your defenses? What are some trigger situations for you?

5. List four actions you can take right now to make relationships in your life stronger and healthier.

Part 2: Questions

1. Feelings are not neutral-they tell us what we are supposed to feel. F
2. Events, places, things that we react to with anger, happiness, fear, shame, etc. are usually associated with experiences we have had in our early formative years. T
3. The purpose of expressing feelings is to communicate to ourselves and to others how we experience and are affected by the events in our lives.
4. There are 5 basic emotions. F
5. Feelings are not a way to manipulate others. F
6. Our feelings are tied to our value systems. When individuals in relationships have different value systems, they often have different and even conflicting emotions about the same experiences. T
7. All of us have the same emotional range. F
8. In healthy relationships, there is a positive exchange of emotions of all kinds. T
9. Our anger belongs to us!! No one else can "make" us angry. Anger, like any other emotion, is a choice. The only person who decides if you are angry or not is you! Only you can decide to stuff it, escalate it, or direct it. T
10. Anger has many levels and it is important to know what level we are at. T
11. Defenses are mechanisms we use to avoid uncomfortable feelings. T
12. Anger is never used as a way of avoiding uncomfortable feelings. F
13. The problem with anger is not the emotion, it is how the emotion is handled. T
14. Anger in one person can ignite anger in another person. T

15. It is important to avoid all uncomfortable emotions as a way of not becoming abusive. F

**PART THREE:
WHERE WE CAME FROM/WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?
Before starting this section, please watch this video:
<https://youtu.be/oAhSffBRqOY>**

FAMILY OF ORIGIN/SELF-ESTEEM/SELF-TALK

We learn how to be in relationships by watching the relationships around us as we grow up. In our families of origin, we learn “rules” of relationships, roles of men and women, and how men and women treat each other. We take these lessons into our adulthood and develop our own adult relationships based on these childhood experiences.

As you answer the following questions, think about how these experiences have impacted how your relationship has developed.

1. What culture did you grow up in? Were you different from other kids? What kinds of things happened in your culture that did not happen in others? Were you proud/ashamed of where you came from? How does your culture treat women?

2. Describe growing-up in your family. How many kids were there? What number are you? How many boys/how many girls? Who were you close to/who were you not close to? Who are you most like/unlike? Was this an intact family/divorced family/blended family? What was the financial status of the family?

3. Who are you most like in your family in terms of appearance, in terms of behaviors? What was your role in your family?

4. Describe your father-as a man, as a husband-from your perspective, as a role mode. What do you take as positive from him, what do you take as negative from him?

5. Describe your mother-as a woman, as a wife-from your perspective, as a role model. What do you take as positive from her, what do you take as negative from her?

6. Do you remember any physical or emotional abuse? If so, from who to who? What was the family reaction to the abuse? What was your reaction to the abuse? What lesson(s) did you learn from these experiences?

7. How was discipline given in your family? How was praise given in your family? Who did the disciplining? What kinds of things were you disciplined for?

8. Did anyone in your family suffer from psychological problems? Chemical abuse? Problems with the law? Major medical problems? Suicides, deaths? How did the family deal with them? How do you think they impacted you?

9. In your family of origin, what expectations did you develop about a "good" man/woman/father/mother/daughter/son/person? How well have you lived up to those expectations?

10. In looking at the above expectations, how have they restricted/enhanced you as a person? What do you wish you could have changed? What do you think you have succeeded at? What do you wish you would have done better?

In this next part, you are going to change roles and you are going to become a female. Answer the following questions as if you were a woman in a relationship.

AS A WOMAN...

1. As a woman, I would expect my partner to be...

2. As a woman, I would expect my partner to treat me in the following ways.

3. As a woman, I would expect my partner to take care of me in the following ways:

4. As a woman, I would be afraid of my partner when...

5. I would show that fear by...

6. As a woman, I would be responsible for the following in our relationship:

7. As a woman, I would be superior to my partner/inferior to my partner:

8. As a woman, I would expect to ask permission for...

9. I would expect my partner to ask permission for...

10. As a woman, I would keep my partner happy by...

11. If the relationship ended, I would do the following...

Please watch this video: <https://youtu.be/xPoFDB8yT4Q>

Part 3 Questions

1. Our families of origin have a lot of influence in how we live our lives as adults. T
2. It is not important to consider different cultures in a relationship. F
3. Our family of origin has a strong impact of the expectations we have for men, for women, and for our partners. T
4. Relationships can be difficult when there are very different families of origin. T

Part 4 SELF-ESTEEM/Self-Talk

Self-esteem is the value we place on ourselves. It is the value we place on ourselves, not the value that is placed on us by others. Self-esteem is important in relationships because:

- ⇒ We tend to treat others based on how we feel about ourselves. If we feel bad about ourselves, we are more likely to treat our loved ones in unhealthy ways.
- ⇒ Good self-esteem allows us to move out of ourselves and to be able to understand and connect with other people.
- ⇒ We tend to perceive, judge, and act in ways that are consistent with our level of self-esteem.
- ⇒ For individuals of low self-esteem, it is difficult to have successes of any kind- nothing is ever good enough.

Self-esteem is important to us as individuals because:

- ⇒ It determines how we let others treat us/how we treat others
- ⇒ It affects decisions and choices-like education, partners, employment
- ⇒ It affects our level of motivation/how hard we try
- ⇒ It determines how we handle difficulties
- ⇒ It impacts our decisions

We all have **“inner self-esteem”** and **“outer self-esteem”**. Inner self-esteem comes from how we feel about ourselves, our value systems, our beliefs, and the “rules” of life that we have been given and have developed for ourselves. Inner self-esteem depends only on us. It is what guides our decisions when the only one who will know if we did good or bad is us.

Outer self-esteem is the esteem that comes from outside of us. It is measured by such things as our looks, our possessions, our social standing, and what others think about us. This self-esteem is much more vulnerable than inner self-esteem because it is always determined by factors outside of us.

While all of us have both inner and outer self-esteem, it is more important to work on and develop our inner self-esteem. We need to be aware of our self-esteem level on a constant basis, and to do things to build up and maintain a good level of inner self-esteem.

How do you know if your self-esteem is low? Check off the list below and see how many apply to you.

- ⇒ Having a sensitivity to criticism
- ⇒ Having an inappropriate response to flattery
- ⇒ Tending to blame self and/or others
- ⇒ Being hypercritical
- ⇒ Feeling persecuted
- ⇒ Having negative feelings about competition-being afraid to compete, needing to always win, and having problems with losing
- ⇒ Tending to be shy, timid, overbold, isolated

Please watch this video. <https://youtu.be/yLkIYch5Gv0>

Your self-esteem depends on your self-concept. Your self-concept comes from a variety of areas. Each area is important and each needs to be attended to on a constant basis. Look at the list below and assess where you are and where you need to be in each of these areas.

1. Your identity- "Who am I?", "What am I here for?"
2. Self-acceptance-knowing and understanding your strengths and weaknesses, feeling okay about yourself.
3. Self-satisfaction-liking who and what you are. A little dissatisfaction is okay because it motivates you to change and grow.
4. Your behavior. Being okay and comfortable with how you act and behave.
5. Moral, ethical self. Doing or not doing what you feel is right or wrong. This can also include religious beliefs.
6. Physical self. How you feel about and accept your body. How you take or do not take care of yourself.
7. Personal self. How you think you are perceived by others.
8. Family self. Having or not having a sense of connectedness with a "family". Being accepted and treasured or feeling judged/rejected by "family".
9. Peer self. How you connect with friends, co-workers, employers.

Think about where you are in all of these areas. Which ones do you feel positively about? Which ones are areas that you need to work on? How will you do that?

There are other factors that impact you level of self-esteem. They are:

- ⇒ Parents and family members
- ⇒ Social class, family
- ⇒ Intellectual ability
- ⇒ Physical appearance, facial and body build

- ⇒ Job, role
- ⇒ Education
- ⇒ Physical strength, stamina
- ⇒ Sexual prowess

Some of these areas are difficult, if not impossible to change. We have to learn to accept ourselves, and work to change the things that we can. We also need to learn to not compare ourselves with others, but rather with our own standards. When we compare ourselves with others on a constant basis, we can do damage to our self-esteem. We can always find others who will have more or less of all of the things we have-comparing with them helps us get "stuck" in our current level of self-esteem and stop working to improve ourselves.

It is important to work on your self-esteem each day. Be aware of your weak areas and work to improve them. Challenge yourself and be honest in your own self-appraisal. The stronger your self-esteem, the more resiliency you will have to stress, difficulties, and challenges. Do something positive for yourself each day and make sure to give yourself credit for what you accomplish each and every day.

WHERE ARE YOU? Check the ones that apply to you

	A person with high self-esteem will...		A person with low self-esteem will...
	Take responsibility for their feelings and actions		Blame others for problems
	Take compliments graciously-saying thank you		Not believe what others say-be suspicious
	Listen to criticism without anger-you don't have to agree		Unable to accept criticism-become angry and defensive
	Give praise and compliments frequently		View compliments as threats
	Take good care of themselves		Not take good care of themselves
	Make decisions based on their values-even when it goes against what others think or want		Base decisions on external input
	Have a sense of humor that does not hurt others-being able to laugh at themselves		Be amused by what makes others look foolish
	Accept mistakes as part of living and learning		Expect or demand perfection-mistakes are failures
	Listen openly to others		Argue, preach, nag
	Focus on the here and now/Learn from the past		Never let go of the past
	Take risks and challenge themselves		No risk taking

<p>YOUR SELF-ESTEEM DEPENDS ON YOU. TAKE CARE OF IT, BUILD IT, AND YOUR SELF-ESTEEM WILL PROTECT YOU IN TIMES OF CHALLENGE.</p>
--

Self-Esteem Builder

1. Make a written list of the following about yourself.
 - ⇒ 10-character assets
 - ⇒ 10 physical assets
 - ⇒ 10 people who genuinely love you
 - ⇒ 10 things you are grateful for
2. Write down five things you would like to change about yourself-only those things that you can change.
3. Write your own eulogy-how you want to be remembered when you have died.

REMEMBER, PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION. WORK ON POSITIVE THOUGHTS.

Your level of self-esteem will vary over time. That is to be expected. Make efforts to be aware of this and to monitor where you are on a daily or weekly basis. Use a scale of 1-10 with 1 being low and 10 being high. Ask yourself where you are and answer honestly. This will help keep you in touch with what is going on with you and what you might need to do to keep strong.

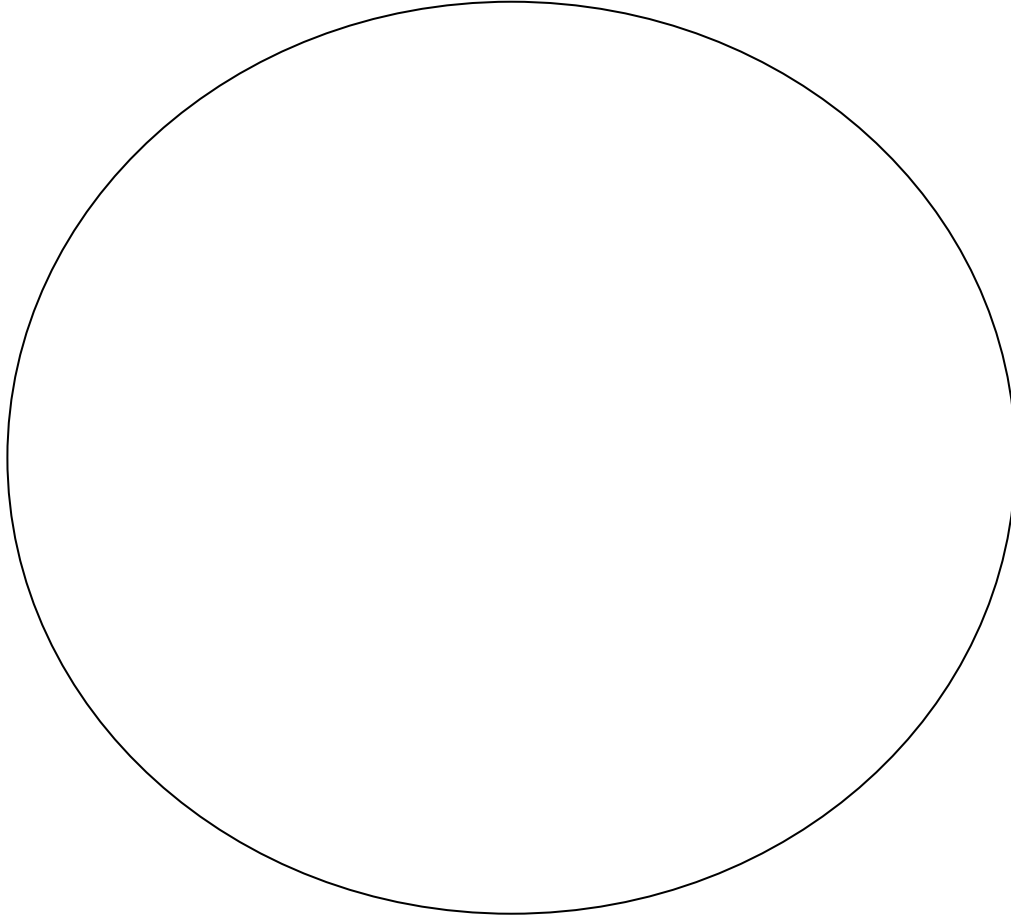
Please watch this video. <https://youtu.be/dhuabY4DmEo>

This video is helpful for building positive self-esteem.
<https://youtu.be/taA33MtvI0E>

YOUR OWN SELF-ESTEEM

List the sources where you get your self-esteem. Things such as job, family, looks, accomplishments, possessions, etc. Then take the circle and divide it into how much of your self-esteem comes from each of those sources.

SELF-ESTEEM WHEEL



Please answer the following questions.

1. How well balanced in my self-esteem wheel? What do I need to do to make it more balanced?

2. How much of my self-esteem comes from inside, how much comes from outside. What needs to be changed about this?

3. Where in my life is my self-esteem enhanced and strong? Where is it attacked and weak?

4. How does my significant relationship help/hurt my self-esteem? What do I do on a regular basis to build and nurture my partner's self-esteem?

5. What is my immediate plan to improve my level of self-esteem?

UNDERSTANDING AND USING SELF-TALK EFFECTIVELY

What is self-talk?

Self-talk is the constant chatter we have going on inside of our heads. Self-talk is the system that decides how we look at what is going on in our world. Self-talk is the filter we use to decide how we are going to respond to things that happen around us.

Here is how the concept works. An event happens. This event is labeled

A. This is step one of self-talk.

A--Event

Next, we have a thought about the event. This thought is often so quick that we are not even aware of the thought. The thought can be how we have reacted to a similar event, the same event when it happened before, or an event that is similar to this one. This thought is labeled **B. This is step two of self-talk.**

A-event-----B-thought

Now there is a reaction based on the thought we just had. The reaction is based on how and what we are thinking about the event. The reaction is labeled **C. This is step three of self-talk.**

A-event-----B-thought---C-reaction.

Most of us believe that the events are what cause the reaction. But that is not true. If events caused reactions, we would all have similar responses and that is not the case. All of our reactions are caused by how **WE** interpret what is going on-based on the experiences of our lives.

The problem that occurs is when our responses cause problems and difficulties in our lives. When we are reacting in unhealthy ways and cause more problems for ourselves. The thoughts we have are often based on our level of self-esteem. When our self-esteem is low, we expect bad things to happen, when our self-esteem is high, we expect good things to happen.

Many of us need to learn and challenge our unhealthy patterns of self-talk. We need to look at the unhealthy and unhappy areas of our lives and analyze our self-talk in these areas. If our self-talk is unhealthy, we need to challenge and change it. That is done by the following way.

Look at the thought we have had about the event and change it. This is called **D. This is step four of self-talk.**

A-event----B-thought----C-reaction----D-new thought

This new self-talk leads to the new reaction which is labeled **E. This is step five of self-talk.**

A-event----B-thought----C-reaction----D-new/healthy thought----E-healthy reaction

When you are looking at yourself and your self-talk patterns use the following as a guide.

1. Identify the activating event that you are upset about.
2. Identify what you are feeling, look at the irrational thoughts and emotions that you are using to upset yourself. Be specific. This may take time as all of us have patterns that have been there for a long time.
3. Challenge those thoughts and beliefs and replace them with new and healthier beliefs and thoughts.
4. Think about how life will change for the positive if you replace the old negative patterns with the new healthier patterns.

This process may seem difficult at first as most of us are unaware of our self-talk. Once we start to look at the difficult areas of our lives and analyze our unhealthy patterns of self-talk, we are able to see patterns that keep us from being where we want to be in life. Then challenging and changing those patterns helps us develop new and healthier patterns of behaving and reacting.

The following are new ways of looking at things and new self-talk that you can use as you begin to change your patterns.

1. I am in charge of my life.
2. I am responsible for the actions of my life.
3. I make my own decisions and assume the responsibility for all actions.
4. I refuse to be put down by the attitudes or opinions of others.
5. My emotional well-being is dependent on how I love and like me.
6. I do not have to prove myself to anyone except myself.
7. I am always growing and working to improve myself.
8. Every experience I have in life-good or bad- is a chance at growth.
9. I choose to do the best I can towards myself and others.
10. I will be kind and patient towards myself.

Remember!!! It is not the event that makes you do or feel something. It is what you tell yourself about the event that determines your actions. You have the power and the control to change what you say and what you do. No one but us makes us feel or do anything. Please watch this video. <https://youtu.be/XYaqdRLHqq0>

EXERCISE

Use this exercise to look at some of your unhealthy self-talk and how you can change them.

PART ONE

1. Describe a situation that seems to always cause problems for you. Be specific

2. What is your reaction to this situation and how does it get you into trouble?

3. Now think about and list the self-talk that you have that creates your unhealthy reaction. Can you see how this self-talk creates unhealthy emotions and behaviors?

PART TWO

Here is where you begin to make changes.

4. List some new and more productive self-talk that you can use to replace what you have been using.

5. What new behaviors and emotions would this new self-talk create? How would the situation be better?

6. List the benefits to your life and your relationships if you make these self-talk changes.

Do this exercise one more time.

PART ONE

7. Describe a situation that seems to always cause problems for you.

8. What is your reaction to this situation and how does it get you into trouble?

9. Now think about and list the self-talk that you have that creates your unhealthy reaction. Can you see how this self-talk creates unhealthy emotions and behaviors?

PART TWO

Here is where you begin to make changes.

10. List some new and more productive self-talk that you can use to replace what you have been using.

11. What new behaviors and emotions would this new self-talk create? How would the situation be better?

12. List the benefits to your life and your relationships if you make these self-talk changes.

REVIEW SHEET

1. What have you learned about your self-esteem in this session? How has your self-esteem impacted your relationship? How has your partner's self-esteem impacted your relationship?

2. What changes do you need to make in your self-talk?

3. How has your family of origin affected your relationship? List the positive and negative.

5. What lessons about having a relationship are you passing on to your children? How do you want to change/modify those lessons?

Part 4 Questions

5. T
6. Self-esteem is the value we place on ourselves. It is the value we place on ourselves, not the value that is placed on us by others. T
7. The most important self-esteem we have is from others in our lives. F
8. Self esteem varies over time and by events in our lives. It is important to monitor how we are feeling on a regular basis. T
9. Self-esteem has an impact of who we choose for partners. T
10. It is impossible to change your self-esteem. F
11. Self esteem and self-concept are the same. F
12. Strong and weak self-esteem come from a variety of sources. T
13. Self-talk is the system that decides how we look at what is going on in our world. Self-talk is the filter we use to decide how we are going to respond to things that happen around us. T
14. Situations are the source of our reactions. F

15. No one but us makes us feel or do anything.
16. How I feel about myself is totally in my control. T
17. It is impossible to change my self-talk. F
18. I am teaching my children what kind of self-talk they will have. T

PART FIVE

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: HOW TO MAKE AND KEEP ONE

Research that has been done has shown that the following qualities are seen as very important to enhancing continued growth and love in a relationship.

Communication

Affection

Compassion/forgiveness

Honesty

Acceptance

Dependability

Sense of humor

Romance (including sex)

Patience

Freedom

Please watch this video: <https://youtu.be/RVcinhuVu9M>

The most mentioned qualities are communication-the desire to be open, to share, to relate, and to actively speak and listen to one another: affection-the traits of caring, understanding, respect, physical and psychological closeness, nurturing, and kindness: compassion/forgiveness-the ability to have empathy, to forgive, to be supportive, and selflessness: honesty-the quality of being able to reveal true feelings at the moment, to verbalize fears, angers, regrets, and expectations.

Qualities that damage relationships are:

Lack of communication

Selfishness/unforgiveness

Dishonesty

Jealousy

Lack of trust

Perfectionism

Lack of flexibility (not being open to change)

Lack of understanding

Lack of respect

Apathy

(Taken from LOVING EACH OTHER-THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS- BY Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.)

Please watch this video: <https://youtu.be/CEUw8-LnhwI>

In healthy relationships the following characteristics are found:

1. The ability to resolve conflict-all relationships will have conflict and each member of the relationship needs to be willing and able to solve the conflict.
2. Flexibility and willingness to compromise.
3. Respect, consideration, and tolerance.
4. Commitment-the relationship is a first priority for each partner.
5. Fulfillment-each allows and supports the other in reaching their desired level of personal and interpersonal growth,
6. Time together and time alone-in a healthy relationship both partners recognize that each needs time alone as well as time spent only with each other.
7. Ability to deal with crises and stresses-these are the times when the true strength and commitment of a relationship are shown.
8. Ability to handle financial problems-another very strong test of any relationship.
9. Open and honest lines of communication.
10. Sense of humor-being able to laugh at themselves and often even at difficult situations.
11. Ability to play-playfulness can bridge the gap between too much distance and too much intimacy.
12. Mutual love and caring.
13. Expressions of appreciation-saying thank you; telling one another what is liked about each other is a very strong form of cement in a relationship.
14. Genuine liking for one another-having a friendship as well as a loveship is very important in a relationship.
15. Flexibility in gender rules-things are not "women's" or "men's" work. Things get done in a cooperative fashion.
16. Religion/traditions-these can be the basis for the family's value system. Religion/traditions tend to provide an anchor for the family group.
17. Compatible child-rearing philosophy and participation-having the same viewpoint about child-rearing can bring a couple closer and certainly makes for better parenting.

(Taken from **The Dynamics of Relationships** by Patricia Kramer)

What is a healthy relationship? Each of us has a different perspective of what we want and need. Think about the following questions as you develop your own definition.

1. In relationships, men are responsible for:

2. In relationships, women are responsible for:

3. For me, a healthy relationship consists of the following:

4. My relationship is/was healthy/unhealthy because:

5. I think the biggest problem between men and women is:

6. My expectations for being a good partner are:

7. My partner's expectations for being a good partner are:

8. Our biggest clashes are:

9. The biggest problems we have in our relationship right now are:

10. We can solve them by:

11. My responsibilities in this relationship are:

12. My partner's responsibilities in this relationship are:

Every relationship has needs. Each individual brings different needs to the relationship. Some of those are similar and some of those are different. Think about what you need from a relationship. List them below.

Now, think about the following. If you could only have three of your needs met in a relationship, which three do you think are the most important to have in a healthy relationship? Why?

What needs do I have that have not been met in my relationship?

How do I get those needs met?

As my relationship has progressed through time, how have my needs changed?

As you think about your relationship and how you want to make it better, use these questions to help you.

1. How is your relationship similar to your parent's? What is different?

2. When and where do you do your best "couple talking"? This may change over the years as the configuration of the family changes.

3. How do you know your partner loves you? How does your partner know you love her?

4. What do you need differently from your partner to know that you are loved? How can you let her know that?

5. What are the ten priorities of your relationship? Are they the same as your partner's? If not, what is different and why.

6. What do you and your partner do to have fun together? How often do you do have fun together?

We all have expectations about what a relationship "should" be like. Sometimes those are met and sometimes they are not. Use the following questions to think about what you thought was going to happen in your relationship.

1. My views about relationships have changed in the following ways:

2. The things I have had to give up since being in a relationship are: I have learned the following from giving those things up.

3. The things my partner has given up since being in a relationship are:

4. The biggest problem between men and women is...

5. The things I need to do to keep my partner happy are:

6. The things I would like my partner to do to keep me happy are:

7. My biggest blind spot about relationships has been:

8. The ways my partner and I let each other down are:

9. My biggest surprise about being in a relationship has been:

What is intimacy?

Intimacy is the freedom to be oneself. Freedom from the fear of rejection. Feeling accepted without having restrictions. Intimacy is supportive rather than restrictive. Intimacy includes closeness, trust, and genuineness. Intimacy is not possessive or controlling. Intimacy includes open two-way communication, tenderness, affection, warmth, and touching.

It is important to remember that there is no "one and only" for any of us. No one person can meet all of our needs and would be unrealistic and overwhelming for one person to have to be "all things" for another.

What attracts us to others?

1. Physical proximity and familiarity
2. Having needs satisfied
3. Being similar
4. Being opposite
5. Doing for others
6. Physical attractiveness
7. Self-esteem

What Are The Possible Danger Zones In Love Relationships?

The behavior at the beginning of the relationship: Very often, early attraction keeps us from looking at and registering behavior that is not okay with us. We find excuses or reasons to not look at behavior that is not what we are comfortable with.

Lack of self-awareness and lack of accurately perceiving the other person: In this area, we often tend to see only what we want to see in another person and to ignore those behaviors that we don't like. In addition, we may not know ourselves well enough and we may pick others who are unhealthy for us.

Mistaking sexual attraction for love: Just having sex with another person does not necessarily mean that they or we are in love.

Mistaking "romantic love" for "durable love": Romantic love is the love that happens at the beginning of a relationship. It is often based on physical attraction instead of the emotional and mental aspects of another person. Sadly, we may often be attracted "physically" to others who are not good for us in any other way.

Emotional and Physical Intimacy

In understanding the healthy development of emotional and physical intimacy with another person, it is important to remember the following:

1. **We only have control over our half of a relationship.** We can ask for what we want in a relationship, but that doesn't mean we will get it. We **only** have control over how much intimacy we are willing to give to another person.
2. **We have no control over the level of emotional or physical intimacy that another person wants from us.** We have **no** control over the level of intimacy that someone else is willing to give to us. What another person wants from us or what another person wants us to give to them is totally their decision. We can only hope that they will be honest with what they want and what they have to give to us.
3. **To stay healthy and to protect oneself, it is safer and less vulnerable to move gradually or slowly through the levels of intimacy than to move rapidly, especially in the beginning of the relationship.** These levels of intimacy are there for us to learn about the other person, while staying safe and not being or becoming overly vulnerable. Moving too fast through the levels of intimacy can open us up to hurt and abuse.

4. **Once a deeper or closer level of emotional or physical intimacy is experienced in a relationship, it is always more difficult to return to a level of lesser intimacy.** The closer we get to another person, the more we want from them and the more we want to give to them. They become more important to us and more difficult to lose.
5. **Individual timing regarding appropriate levels of emotional and physical self-disclosure is different for different people.** For safety and for developing a healthy relationship, these differences need to be expressed and respected. Putting pressure on someone to give physical or emotional intimacy **before they determine they are ready** is a violation of that person and can ruin a potentially good relationship. If one person is not ready for a new level of intimacy, the relationship is not ready for a new level of intimacy.
6. **In our society, males are usually more comfortable with, often more skilled at, and may tend to expect more rapid sexual intimacy. On the other hand, most women are usually more comfortable with, often more skilled at, and may tend to expect from themselves and others more rapid emotional intimacy.** The result of this differing socialization is conflict, frustration, confusion, resentment, and frequent disillusionment. In addition, women may feel that they are in a relationship with someone because they have permitted physical closeness, while men may just think it was a "sexual thing".

What are the components of love?

- **Caring**-feeling that the other person's well-being and happiness is as important as your own.
- **Attachment**-the need and desire to be with the other person. Wanting approval and love from the other person.
- **Intimacy**-having close and confidential communication. In romantic love there is also the physical arousal component. Expressing deep feelings, sharing about ones' self, and showing tenderness through touching and communicating are important parts of intimacy. Sexual intimacy, often called sexual exclusiveness, is also a part of this component.

The need to love and to be loved is one of our strongest needs.

What are some of the ways that we can develop a loving relationship?

Learn all you can about each other.

Learn to be honest with each other.

Learn to understand each other's needs, moods, and temperaments.

Respect each other as individuals with different needs and desires.

Allow the relationship to grow slowly and constantly.

Nurture more, criticize less.

Give a lot of positive attention to each other.

Learn to love yourself so that you can love others more.

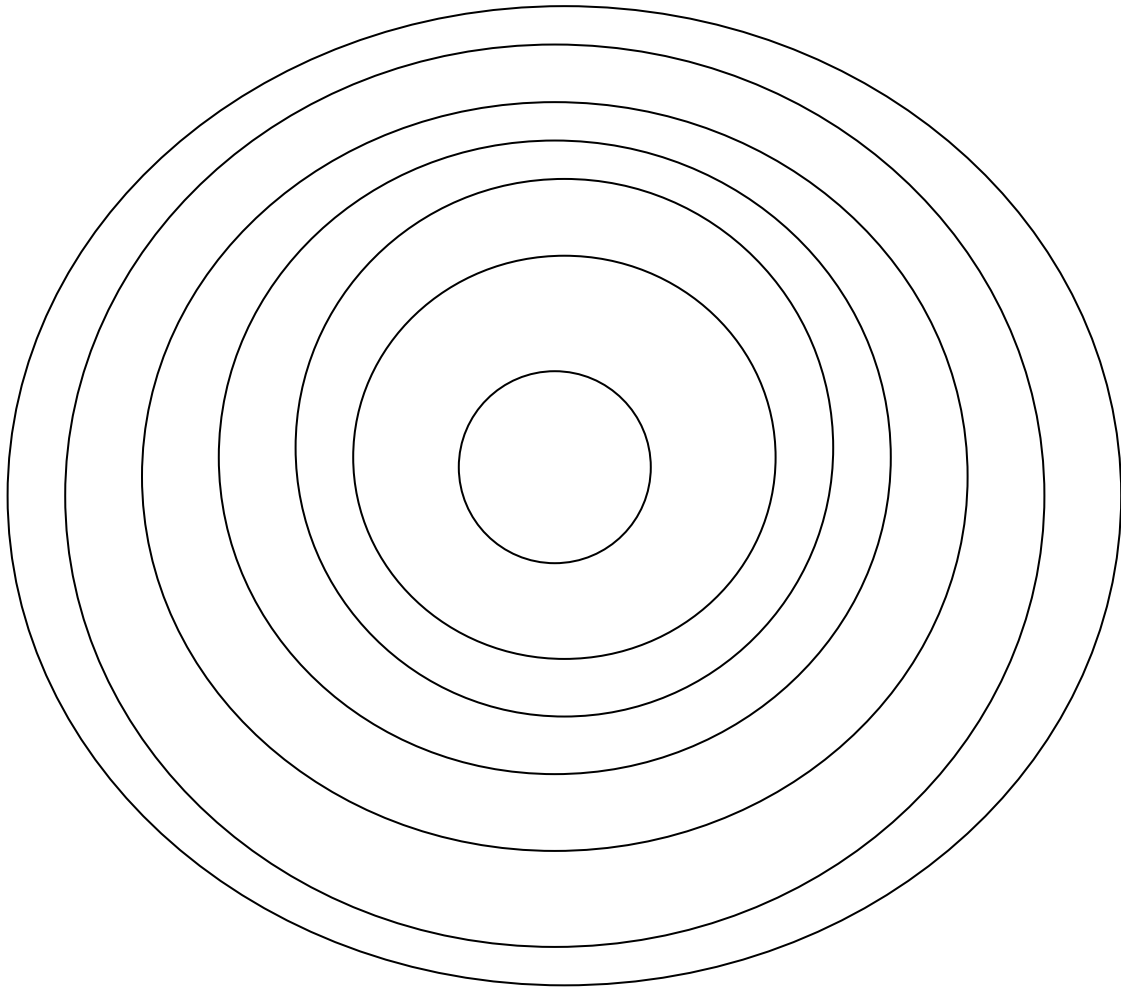
Learn to express your needs, wants, desires, and feelings and to allow your partner to express their needs, wants, and feelings.

Tell yourself that you are wonderful and that you deserve to be happy!!! Do this everyday. You can only love another person as well as you love yourself.

(Adapted from Geffner & Mantooth, 2000)

Intimacy Circle

The intimacy circle below is where we put everyone in our lives. The further out on the layers, the less intimate the relationship. The closer to the center, the more intimate the relationship. Everyone in our life has a place on our intimacy circle. People move from layer to layer, depending on the level of intimacy of the relationship. Another important thing to consider is that in any relationship there are two intimacy circles going on -- yours and the other person's.



Consider the following questions and note your answers on the circle on the prior page and below:

1. Where on your circle is your partner? Where do you think you are on your partner's circle?

2. Where do you put your partner when you are angry, hurt, or upset? Where does your partner put you when s/he is angry, hurt, or upset?

3. How well populated is your circle right now?

4. How do people get moved from one level to another on your circle? How do you let them know where they are on your circle?

5. What level do people usually start at in your circle? Are there any levels that are "off-limits" to others?

6. How does the circle change when you are depressed, happy, or under stress?

7. What, if anything would you like to change about your circle?

Intimacy Assignment

What do I **want** in an intimate relationship? What do I want to get from another person? What might I have to do in order to get those things?

What can I **bring** to an intimate relationship? What do I want to give to another person?

What do I **give** to my partner in this relationship? How do I know I give this?

What actions can you take right now to nurture and to help your love relationship grow?

About Sex

Sex has different meanings to each person. Some people view sex as a way to connect with another individual on a more intimate level. Some view sex as an extension of their love. Others may view sex as an outlet of stress or tension. The following is meant to help you clarify YOUR definition of sex, and your values, feelings and expectations when you are sexually intimate with someone.

Answer the following questions as honestly as possible. This is not something that should be judged. It is a process of self-realization to understand what motivates you or limits you sexually.

Sex, to me, means:

My first sexual experience was:

Sex is important to me because:

I think masturbation is:

I feel attractive when:

I feel attractive to my partner when:

A partner has told me that I am most attractive when:

When my partner rejects me sexually, I (include feelings & actions):

When I don't feel like being sexually intimate, I:

After having sex, I feel:

A time I regret having sex (include why):

A time I used sex to get what I wanted:

I feel used sexually when:

Sex after an argument is:

Refusing sex to punish a partner is:

If my partner cheated on me sexually, I would feel/do:

It is ok/not ok for me to cheat sexually on my partner because:

Flirting is:

A person in a relationship should/should not flirt (include why):

Do you think men can have female friends? Can women have male friends?

I feel comfortable/ uncomfortable trying new things sexually:

Men think sex is:

My partner has told me that sex is important to her because:

If I was told that there could be no sex in my relationship, I would:

If I got bored with the sexual relationship, I would:

What I like most about sex with my partner is:

What I like least about sex with my partner:

If I want to have sex and my partner doesn't, I usually:

One-night stands are:

Sex without protection is:

Do/did your dating relationships get sexual quickly? Why?

Sex and intimacy are two entirely different areas in a relationship. You can experience each independently of the other. Many people have various intimate relationships that don't involve sex. Emotional intimacy can be nurtured in a dating relationship as well as with family and friends. However, sometimes emotional intimacy is frightening, and the vulnerability is so uncomfortable that some people avoid it altogether. It is usually these individuals who feel isolated and use sex as way to feel quickly connected without emotional vulnerability.

The problem they often find is that sex doesn't fill the real need, which is to feel connected to another person. People who are emotionally connected to friends and family usually don't feel isolated but may feel frustrated with their sex life. The difference is that a person who has sex without understanding what sex means to the other person is diving head first into a pool without knowing if there is water in it. If sex is an outlet for you to relieve tension but for your partner it means, "We are exclusive and I have license to ask of your whereabouts", having sex would not be a good idea.

Sex is a process of negotiating with your partner so that both feel heard, respected and nurtured through intimacy (which is not always sexual). Answer the following questions:

Ways in which I can be emotionally intimate:

Ways in which I can be physically intimate with my clothes on:

Ways in which I can be sensual without sexual intercourse:

Ways in which I can arouse my partner without touching her:

Ways in which I like to be aroused without being touched:

Ways in which I can convey my desire for sex:

"Sex without intimacy is sex. Sex with intimacy is phenomenal".

RELATIONSHIP RULES

All relationships have rules. Each person brings in rules from their past relationships, past experiences, and from their family of origin. There are three kinds of rules in relationships.

1. The rules that both partners agree on and use. These are the easy rules of a relationship.
2. The rules that have to be negotiated and compromised as the relationship develops. These rules present some challenges to the relationship as they highlight differences and possible areas of conflict.

3. The "hidden" rules. These are the rules that no one knows about until they are broken. These are the most difficult rules to navigate and present the biggest challenges to a relationship.

The more a couple knows about the rules of their relationship, the better equipped they are to handle problems as they occur. Think about the following as you develop an awareness of the rules of your relationship.

1. What were the rules for dealing with anger, sadness, conflict, intimacy in your home when you were growing up? Were these rules different for males vs. females, adults vs. children?

2. What are the rules for dealing with anger, sadness, conflict, intimacy in the family or relationship you have now? How are they different/similar to the ones you had growing up?

3. How, if at all, would you like to change or modify those rules?

List the rules you know of in your relationship. List the ones that are important to you and the ones you know are important to your partner.

My Rules	My partner's rules

Part 5 Questions:

1. Good communication is one of the most important qualities in a good relationship. T
2. In a healthy relationship, it is important to not be aware of what your partner needs or wants. F
3. In a healthy relationship, it is possible to "make" your partner change. F
4. We often don't pay enough attention to another's bothersome behaviors in the beginning of a relationship. T
5. Some people view sex as a way to connect with another individual on a more intimate level. Some view sex as an extension of their love. T
6. Sex and intimacy are not two entirely different areas in a relationship. F
7. There are three kinds of rules in relationships. T
8. The most difficult relationship rules are the hidden ones. T

Part 6 Boundaries

What is a Bottom Line?

Your "bottom line" is a point that, for you, is unacceptable to be exceeded. It is a limit after which you will not allow any more of whatever is happening to occur. For example, a bottom line that is often found in relationships concerns being faithful. Most of us want the person we are involved with to be sexually faithful to us. Many of us say that if our partner is not faithful, we will leave the relationship. The true test of that bottom line is whether or not we leave the relationship once we discover infidelity.

We all have bottom lines in our lives whether we think about them or not. We live in a society where we have to conform to "bottom lines" all the time. When we are driving in a car and come to a red light, we usually stop. Why? Because we know what can happen if we don't. If we break the rules of society, we have to pay the consequences. **That's a bottom line: Break the rules, pay the price.**

Sometimes we use bottom lines unfairly. We have them, but we don't tell our partners or friends what they are until they break them. Then we punish them for having broken them. This kind of bottom line can cause a lot of problems in a relationship. It can even destroy a relationship. **So, how do you use "bottom lines"?**

Step 1.

First, you have to decide what is acceptable to you in your life and what is unacceptable. Remember that this is your life and your bottom line. Don't choose a bottom line because everyone else has it or because you might be embarrassed if others found out what your real bottom line was. Remember, you will have a lot of bottom lines in your life and they sometimes change as circumstances in your life change.

There are two parts to a bottom line. The first part is simply establishing what it is, and the second part is determining what the consequences will be if it is crossed. Remember, there are all kinds of possible consequences, and they don't necessarily have

to be drastic. Naturally, the more important the situation, the more severe the consequences will be. Very often, we don't figure out both parts of a bottom line and then when it is broken, we are not sure of what the consequences need to be. (And when that is the case, we usually go for drastic consequences instead of milder ones).

Step 2.

The next step is letting the other people in your life know what your bottom lines are. This can be tricky. It is very important to be very specific and very clear in stating what you want. For example, you might tell your partner that you have a bottom line that you want your relationship to be loving. The problem that can occur is when you and your partner have different ideas of what a "loving" relationship is. He/she may be doing everything that they think/feel shows a loving relationship and you may want something entirely different.

Another benefit of stating your bottom lines concisely is that your partner will be able to tell you if he/she is able to give you what you want, and sometimes you will both end up compromising. Also, don't forget to convey to your partner what the consequences are if your bottom line is crossed. This way, they know what to expect if they decide to break or cross your bottom line.

Step 3.

This is the step that hopefully you won't have to use much. This is where the bottom line has been broken and the consequences must be imposed. This is also the step that most of us have the most problems with. We tend to find excuses/reasons for why the other person broke our bottom line, and then we don't end up imposing the consequences. We might say, "Well, he/she was drunk and didn't know what he/she was doing", or "It only happened one time, and I know it won't ever happen again". What this means is that we don't really have a bottom line and that there is no reason for anyone in our life to act as if we do.

Often times we don't follow through with the consequences because we have made them really extreme. Either we can't impose them, or we are afraid to. This is why it is very important to think our bottom lines through very carefully.

When we set bottom lines we show respect for ourselves and for others. We are also telling others that we demand respect from them. Every time we allow our bottom lines to be broken without consequences, we create a new and lesser bottom line, we lose self-respect, and we lower our self-esteem. We also allow anger to build up within ourselves.

Sadly, what often happens is that a person's bottom line gets broken over and over again until it can't possibly be pushed any further. The result of this is that the person who has allowed their bottom line to be broken becomes enraged and very often violent. This can be avoided if we are clear on what our bottom lines are and committed to sticking to them.

It is very important to remember that **a bottom line is not an ultimatum.** A bottom line is something you decide on for yourself. The people in your life have a *choice* if they want to accept it or not.

Please watch this video: <https://youtu.be/KhW4g9urdXQ>

Bottom Line Exercise

Please give an example of three important bottom lines in your life. Be very clear, brief, and complete. Include the behaviors that you expect/want and the consequences if those bottom lines are broken.

1. Bottom line

Consequence

2. Bottom line

Consequence

3. Bottom line

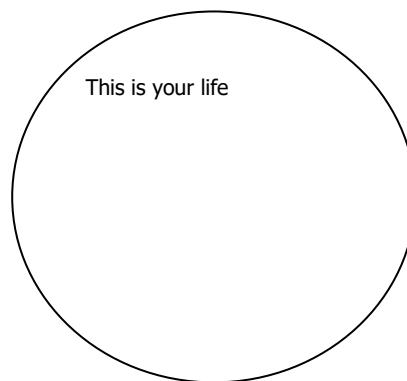
Consequence

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries-the limits we set to provide safety for ourselves and to let others know what they can and can't do to or with us-are important because they help us decide who can and can't in our life, what we expect from others and from ourselves, and let us know when it is time to leave an unhealthy relationship.

In many abusive relationships, one or both partners may have limited abilities to set or maintain good boundaries. One or both partners may not know how to deal with uncomfortable issues that arise, and anger and abusive behavior may be the outcome.

One of the best ways to learn to set boundaries is to look at your life as if it were a pie chart. and then look at the demands on your energy as if they were pieces of the pie. Take some time to do the exercise below.



How much of your time, energy, etc. goes into work? _____ %
How much goes into sleeping? _____ %
How much goes into your primary relationship? _____ %
How much goes into family? _____ %
How much goes into others? _____ %
How much goes into just you? _____ %
What other categories are there for you? _____ %

Total = 100%

Portion the circle according to the various demands there are on you.

In looking at the circle:

Do you like the way things are parceled out? Is there good balance in your life? Is your life under control or out of control?

Would you like to change anything? If so, what?

Would you like to add or delete anything? If so, what?

What discoveries have you made about you and your time?

Can you see some reasons why you are not able to do some of the things you may want to do? What are they?

Why might you not have the energy available to do what you need to do for yourself?

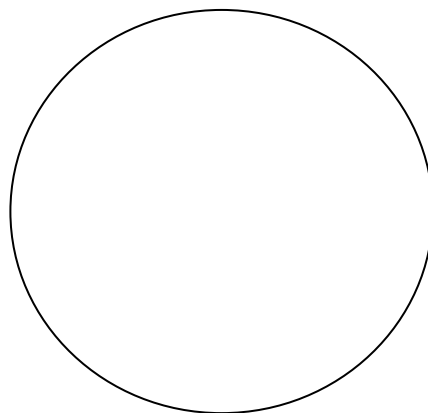
Who determines the categories in your life, you or someone else?

Now, do the exercise below:

How would your ideal circle of life look? Portion the categories the way you would like them to be in the circle below.

How much of your time, energy, etc. goes into work?	_____	%
How much goes into sleeping?	_____	%
How much goes into a primary relationship?	_____	%
How much goes into family?	_____	%
How much goes into others?	_____	%
How much goes into just you?	_____	%
What other categories are there for you?	_____	%

Total = 100%



In order to get to your ideal circle, you have to take control of your life. You have to decide how your energy will be allocated, where to draw the lines and how to replenish yourself when you are tired. This gives you internal control over your life, instead of having your life controlled by external events. This is having healthy boundaries.

Forgiveness

The ability to forgive is important in a relationship. All relationships will have events from each partner that need to be forgiven in order for the relationship to proceed. The only person who can decide what you can and will forgive is you. This will vary from person to person and even from situation to situation.

Forgiveness is...

- A by-product to an on-going healing process
- An internal process-it has its' own pace and speed
- A sign of positive self-esteem
- Letting go of intense emotions attached to incidents from our past
- Recognizing that we no longer need our grudges and resentments
- No longer wanting to punish the people who hurt us
- Accepting that nothing we do to punish them will heal us
- Freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by withholding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds.
- Moving on

Forgiveness is not...

- Forgetting
- Condoning
- Absolution
- A form of self-sacrifice
- A clear cut, one-time decision

What are the things you need to forgive in your partner in order for the relationship to grow?

What are the things your partner needs to forgive in order for the relationship to grow?

Part 6 Questions

1. Boundaries are not important in intimate relationships. F
2. Bottom lines are not ultimatums. T
3. In many abusive relationships, one or both partners may have limited abilities to set or maintain good boundaries. T
4. Both members of a relationship need to have their own personal boundaries. T
5. Forgiveness is forgiving. F
6. Forgiveness is for the one who is forgiving, not for the one who is forgiven. T
7. Be able to forgive is a sign of healthy self-esteem. T
8. Forgiving does not always mean that a relationship will survive. T

Part 7-Communication

Communication is the link between parts of a relationship-one of the "glues" that holds a relationship together. When the parts of the relationship are "communicating" they are creating a "community". Communication can do great damage or great enhancement to a relationship.

Good communication does not just happen, it is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. With strong, effective communication skills, relationships of all kinds improve, conflicts can be resolved, and the members of the relationship may feel closer and more bonded.

Messages come to us in many forms. We are constantly bombarded by information/ communication coming to us from many sources (Jones & Shechter, 1992); most of our communication is non-verbal. It is important to understand which methods we use to communicate most often to others, and which we focus on when others try to communicate with us.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

1. Perception
2. Expectation
3. Involvement

Perception

It is the recipient - the person who gets/is given the message, who communicates. **"Unless there is someone who hears, there is no communication, only noise."** All meanings of any communications are put there by the person, who receives the message, not by the person who sends the message. The receiver decides what the giver of the communication means, wants or has.

The person who sends the message may have an intended message, but unless the receiver has a set of "shared definitions" with the sender, the message received may not be the message sent. Since the receiver of the message is the one who acts on the message, they are also the ones who give/place the meaning to the message. This is a very important component to learn.

Relationships get into a lot of trouble because of the difference between people about "meanings." The receiver *assumes* that they know what the sender "means" and does not check it out. If the assumption is wrong, there could be a problem between the sender and the receiver.

This can be especially true when the communication is about something important, difficult, or touchy. The sender may "beat around the bush" and the receiver may not check things out enough. As a result, the true meaning of the sent communication is not received, and problems can result.

The phrase "I love you" is a good example. This phrase can mean very different things to each member communicating it. Unless they agree on which meaning is being used, they will both assume that their definition is the agreed one and they will both react from their definition. If these definitions or "meanings" are very different, a big problem could result.

Perception then is not logic; it is experience and is only a part of the whole picture. For a communication to be understood, the communication must be in the recipients' language, and he/she must have some understanding of what is being "said".

Whenever anything is "communicated" to us, we see/pay attention to only the part of what is being communicated that matters to us. As an example, think about a child wanting something from a parent. The child asks and asks and when the parent says, "yes" with conditions attached, the child only hears the "yes". We are all like that. We hear the "I love you" and not the, "but..." And what we end up getting hurt by is the part that we didn't/couldn't/didn't want to hear.

Expectation

Expectation is the sense that something is going to happen. Very often, we have something in mind of what we think or want to happen. We tend to see or perceive what we expect to see or perceive and to filter out the unexpected or unwanted. We all get used to certain patterns in our lives. Then we "tune out" because we know those patterns and we can fill in the spaces when we hear the beginning of the pattern.

This is all well and good-as long as the pattern holds. Where we get into trouble is when the pattern changes and we are on autopilot and not paying attention to the changes.

Involvement

Involvement is having or making demands on the receiver of the communication. Communication always makes demands. It demands that the recipient of the communication become somebody, does something, or believes something.

The closer the relationship, the more involvement there is. When people are closely involved, they start to feel demands simply from a sigh, or a tone of voice.

The problem occurs when the demand that is heard is not the demand that is being sent. We react to what we **"hear"** instead of what is being **"sent"**. Most of us who have been in committed relationships can come up with one or two tales of being involved in this kind of situation. For example, many of us "know" from a certain sigh, word, or movement from our partner that they want to have sex with us. This is great if we also want to have sex. However, if we aren't in the mood, we may already be reacting to/avoiding what we "know" they want before they have even brought it up. And boy does this create a problem when they really didn't want sex, but something else.

Big disagreements can happen when one partner misunderstands what the other wanted before even being asked!!!

There are three basic premises of human communications.

1. **It is impossible to not communicate.** Communication is going on all of the time, with or without words.
2. **Human communication is a multi-level phenomenon.** There are two parts to human communication:
 - a. Content - informational value.
 - b. Feeling - what the information is about. This has to do with the relationship between the sender and the receiver. It is very different when your partner tells you "I love you" and your mother tells you "I love you".
3. **The message sent is not necessarily the message received.**

When we look at the communication in any relationship, that communication is easier to understand if we know something about that relationship. We all communicate differently in the many relationships we have. We speak in different ways, in different words, and we have varying expectations in different relationships.

These expectations are the "rules" of the various relationships in our lives. Different relationships have different rules. Many times, the people in the relationship are not aware of the "rules". Spouses may communicate differently than do boss and subordinate or parent and child. The kind of relationship that exists has a strong impact on the communication patterns.

Feedback

Communication goes two ways—from us and to us. The communication that comes to us helps us learn about ourselves and how we are seen in the relationship we have with whoever is communicating with us. This is called feedback, and it comes in many forms. Sometimes others tell us how we affect them; sometimes they avoid or seek us out more this is also feedback but in a different form. The more trust and comfort we have in the relationship, the more we will believe the feedback.

Feedback is a way of helping another person to consider changing his/her behavior. It is communication to a person (or group) that gives that person information about how he or she affects others.

Feedback helps an individual keep his behavior “on target” and to thus better achieve his or her goals. When you give feedback, use the following guidelines in order to ensure that the feedback gives the best benefit.

If you want good communication in your relationships, you need to become a good communicator. The only person you will ever be able to improve in your lifetime is **YOU**. However, when we make changes in ourselves, those changes tend to impact and create the way for changes to happen in others.

One way of starting good communication is to begin to use “I” messages. “I” messages are statements that let others know how you feel—you are taking responsibility for your feelings—you do not attack the receiver, you give information about the behaviors that need attention, and you give information about what specific changes you would like to have happen.

“I” messages are your emotional truths and expressions of your feelings. “I” messages allow others to respond from their emotional truths and feelings. **“I” messages are always right because they are about you and not about others.**

“You” messages; on the other hand, tend to be controlling, aggressive, and judging of the recipient of the message. “You” messages tend to mean that there must be a winner and a loser in the communication.

“I” messages are especially helpful in giving feedback to another person. The following is a good guideline for giving feedback.

Giving feedback

Think about the amount of information that the person you want to give feedback to can use, rather than the amount that you may have, or feel that you have to give.

Following are the steps of an "I" message.

1. **Describe the situation.** Be specific and objective. Make behavioral observations, not inferences. Deal with the present, not the past behavior. Stay away from words like "always" and "never"
 - When _____ (describe the situation)
(When you come home four hours late without having called)
2. **Express your own feelings and take responsibility for them.** Focus on sharing this to assist the recipient, rather than as a "release" for you. Describe the consequences to you as a result of the other person's behavior.
 - I feel _____ because _____
(I am frightened because I am afraid you have been hurt)
3. **Specify the changes you want.** Be realistic. Ask, don't demand. Express what you want-be realistic and don't make demands. Make sure you express the changes in behaviors you would like to see.
 - I would like/appreciate _____
(I would like you to call me if you are going to be late)
4. **Share your perceptions of the possible outcomes of the changes.**
 - This will result in _____
(This will help me feel more comfortable and not angry when you do come home)

"I" statements

"I" statements are direct, clear communication to another person that demonstrate:

1. Respect for ones' self and the other.
2. Willingness to take responsibility and initiative for ones' own needs.
3. Separating oneself from another and focusing on what is important to "me" instead of "you". Examples I feel.... I want... I believe... I need... I think...

Criteria for effective feedback

1. Feedback focuses on describing rather than judging behavior. It describes a reaction to a behavior and allows the other person to accept or not accept the feedback. By avoiding judging statements, the other person may be less likely to become defensive and then be able to hear the feedback.
2. Feedback is specific rather than general. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that "just now when we were deciding the issue you did not listen to what others said and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you."
3. Feedback takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of the feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.
4. Feedback is directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about. Don't give feedback on things that a person has no control over-like height, age, gender, or ethnicity. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some issue over which he/she has no control.
5. Feedback is solicited rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver, on their own, has formulated the kind of question that those observing him or her can answer. If an opportunity for giving feedback is not presented, one can ask, "Would you like to know what I...feel...think...observe...need?"
6. Feedback is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending of course, on the persons' readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.)
7. Feedback is checked to ensure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver tell you what they heard you say. Feedback may be misunderstood if it is potentially threatening or felt to be potentially threatening to the receiver.
8. Both the giver and the receiver need to check with others, if possible, the accuracy of the feedback. Is this one person's impression or an impression shared by others?
9. Feedback involves sharing of information rather than giving advice.
10. Feedback contains only the amount of information that the receiver can tolerate. If too much is offered, there can be an overload and all of the feedback may be rejected.

11. Feedback concerns what is said or done, not why.

Feedback, then, is a way of giving help. It is a corrective mechanism for the individual who wants to learn how well his behavior matches his or her intentions and it is a means for establishing one's identity--for answering who am I?

The functions of feedback

1. It helps the person know how they stand in the eyes of the group, the individual, etc.
2. It helps us know how effective we have been in achieving our goals.
3. It reinforces, steers, and directs subsequent behavior.
4. It helps us know the effect of our behavior on others.
5. It allows us to check our self-concept against what others say.
6. It stimulates changes in feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge.
7. It helps us to learn to observe our own and others' behaviors carefully.
8. It helps develop more effective and harmonious relationships.
9. It corrects inappropriate behavior and helps the person to realize that their behavior may not be appropriate or may not have the intended impact.

The types of feedback

1. Conscious-nodding agreement.
2. Unconscious-falling asleep.
3. Spontaneous-a "thank you".
4. Solicited-"yes, it did help".
5. Verbal-"no".
6. Non-verbal-leaving the room.
7. Formal-an award/a pink slip.
8. Informal-applause.
9. Trusted-a small child saying, "Mommy, you're getting fat"

The processes of feedback:

1. Leveling-letting others know how I feel about myself. (I'm tired)
2. Confrontation-letting others know how I feel about them. (I feel hurt when you laugh at me)
3. Encounter-two people leveling with each other.

Why feedback is often avoided:

1. We may be afraid to hurt another's feelings.
2. We may be afraid to take the risk. Afraid that we will lose the relationship, or that we will be attacked in retaliation.
3. We withdraw, not saying anything-nothing happens.

Listening

Listening is one of the most important components of communication. It is often a lost art. Listening is the part of communication that gives us information about others, what they want, what they need, where we stand with them. Unfortunately, men and women listen in very different ways.

- ⇒ Women maintain mostly steady eye contact when listening.
- ⇒ Women nod their heads when listening, smile, and make humming sounds.
- ⇒ Men often take these behaviors as agreement-even when there is not agreement. This leads to misunderstandings.
- ⇒ Men tend to have sporadic eye contact when listening.
- ⇒ Men rarely nod when listening; they tend to maintain a neutral facial expression.
- ⇒ Men often engage in additional activities when listening-like paper shuffling, walking around, even reading. Women then assume that the man is not listening and may become upset.
- ⇒ Women tend to listen more to the emotional content of the message, and men tend to listen more to the factual content of the message (Pettigree-Boyle, 1994).

“It takes two to speak the truth: one to speak and one to listen” (Henry David Thoreau). This is one of the basis truths of human communication. Listening is one of the most important components of communication. If there is no listening and interpretation of the message, there is no message.

Hints on being a good listener.

- ❖ Have an open heart. Let go of the anger, resentment, and fear.
- ❖ Have an open mind-focus on the speaker only. Don't worry about a rebuttal or response. Listen to what the other is saying carefully.
- ❖ Open your body up and allow eye contact. Use gestures like nodding and smiling.
- ❖ Have a desire for a positive outcome.
- ❖ Express yourself clearly.
- ❖ Allow others to express themselves in their own way.

It is important to learn to listen without having our defenses up, to listen actively without simply waiting for our chance to talk. The best and most effective form of listening is called active listening.

Active listening

The art of listening involves the whole person. A good listener uses not only his ears, but also his eyes, his body, his mind, his past experiences, his intuition, his entire self. A good listener hears what is being said (content) and also the feelings of the other person in the on-going process (mood).

A good listener will:

- *Concentrate and focus attention on the speaker.
- *Verbally indicate listening by paraphrasing the speaker’s meaning
- *Non-verbally indicate listening with body language such as contact, nodding, and body position.
- * Have an open "I want to understand" attitude.
- * Encourage the speaker. (Tell us more)
- * Ask appropriate questions.
- * Express interest and empathy.
- * Use thinking time effectively.
- * Listen for ideas and central ideas and themes, not just facts.
- * Pay attention to content-don’t get sidetracked by the delivery or mannerisms of the deliverer.
- * Ask themselves “How can I benefit from this conversation?”
- * Remember that thought is four times as fast as speech-use that extra time to work at responding to the message instead of working on other things in your life.
- * Don’t jump to conclusions. Listen to the entire message and don’t fill in parts-even if you think you know what is coming next.
- * Resist distractions.
- * Pay attention to how the message is being delivered-body language, tone of voice, facial expression, rate of speech, pitch of voice. These are all valuable pieces of information in the communication.
- * Maintain a “positive listening appearance”
- * Encourage the speaker to continue.

Think about and list ways that you shut others out when they are communicating with you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

When do you use these behaviors? Are there certain things that trigger you shutting others out? List the ones that you are aware of.

What can you do to change these behaviors?

Positive responses to use that indicate active listening:

Reflection-"it sounds like..."

Restatement "what you mean is..."

Question for clarification "are you saying...?"

Negative responses that may stop communication from going further:

1. Advice

2. Denial

3. Joke

Some aids for active listening with someone else and in a discussion group:

1. Look at the person who is talking.
2. Do not interrupt.
3. Be silent.
4. Let the other person keep an idea or feeling that is different from your own.
5. Ask, "Would you say more about...?" rather than "why."
6. Tell the person what you hear them saying so they know you understand.

Communication Roadblocks

We block communication by using these kinds of responses:
(As you read these, put a mark by the ones you use)

1. ___ **Ordering, directing, commanding - telling the other to do something.** "Don't talk to your mother like that," "Stop complaining"
2. ___ **Warning, threatening, promising - telling the other what consequences will occur if he does something.** "If you do that, you'll be sorry" or, "If you're a good boy, Santa Claus will come."
3. ___ **Moralizing, preaching, shoulds, and oughts.** "You shouldn't act like that", "Children are supposed to respect their elders"; "Men should be able to do what they want."
4. ___ **Teaching, lecturing, giving logical answers.** Not hearing the other person through but jumping in with your own opinions: "Stop crying, it's not a big deal".
5. ___ **Advising, giving solutions or suggestions.** Telling the other person how to solve their problems: "If you don't like it, you should just leave."
6. ___ **Judging, criticizing, name-calling, labeling.** Making a negative judgment or evaluation, making the other feel foolish, shaming them: "You are so stupid that you never get anything right!", "You will always be a loser."
7. ___ **Praising, agreeing.** Offering a positive evaluation or judgment: "Well, I think you can do it."
8. ___ **Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling.** Taking the other person out of their feelings: "You'll feel different tomorrow."
9. ___ **Interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing.** Telling the other what his motives are or why he is doing or saying something: "You always want to make me angry."
10. ___ **Probing, questioning.** Trying to find reasons, motives, causes, so you can solve the problem: "When did you start feeling this way?"
11. ___ **Withdrawing, distracting.** Trying to get the other away from the problem: "Just forget it, it's no big deal."
12. ___ **Sarcasm. Humoring.** Kidding the other person out of their feelings: "Now, now, let's not be a baby about this."

Take a minute to think about the ones you have checked off. Can you remember conversations that have stopped because of using one of these? Is it possible that the use of these has hindered your communication with someone important in your life?

Special Strategies

These techniques will help you avoid becoming sidetracked or manipulated when you make requests.

Broken record - Keep your listener from slipping away. Shift back to the issue and calmly repeat your point:

Comment - "No, let's go to the movie I want. Yours is no good."

Response - "I understand what you're saying, but what I want to do is ... Or, "yes, but I'm still not interested in going to *that* one... or, "you may be right, but the point is..."

Time out - Delaying responding until people have calmed down and can be more reasonable. For example, a situation might be handled like this:

Comment - "I hate you! I'm going to get you back for this!"

Response - "You're so angry at me right now that it's hard for us to talk..." Or "when you threaten me like this, we can't work things out very well. Let's set a time when we will both be cooled down."

State the importance - Clarify how important this is to you and that you don't want to be brushed aside. This technique is often effective when used together with the broken record technique.

Comment - "Oh yeah, we'll get to that later. It's no big deal."

Response - "This is really important to me..." or, "It's really important that we talk about this..."

Admitting past errors - Avoid getting sidetracked by the past. Admit that you may have made errors in the past, but this is now, and you are trying to handle things better. For example:

Comment - "You're the one who acted like such a jerk at the last party!"

Response - "You may be right, I probably could have handled things better, now what I'd like to try is..." or, "yes, I'm working on that, but right now I'm concerned about..."

Playing detective - Ask sincerely about the other person's specific complaints so you can understand and problem solve.

Comment - "You never care about anybody but yourself!"

Response - "What specifically did I do that bothered you? Let me know so that I will have a better chance of not doing it in the future..." Or, "I understand that you think I don't care about you. Tell me what I can do differently to let you know that I really do care."

Questions

What are your biggest problems with communication?

In your intimate relationship, what are the areas where you communicate well and what are the areas where communication is difficult?

What are you afraid of in communicating honestly with your partner?

What would you like your partner to change in how they communicate with you?

How can you help them do that?

Men and women communicate differently. We phrase things differently and we use different ways of asking questions or making requests. Below are some of the differences between men and women in communicating. Look at them and see if you recognize you and your partner.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN'S COMMUNICATION STYLES

(Please note; these are general observations and may not apply to all individual; in fact, in some situations, they may be reversed)

Men: Talk about money, sports, facts, business, and events.

Women: Talk about feelings, relationships, people and psychological states.

Men: Use commands to get what they want.

Women: Use requests to get what they want.

Men: Use and respond to actions when communicating.

Women: Rely on and respond to words when communicating.

Men: Communicate to persuade, argue, control, or impress.

Women: Communicate to share, inform, support or ingratiate.

Men: Use factual and action-oriented language.

Women: Use emotional and evaluative language.

Men: Emphasize talking rather than listening in conversations.

Women: Emphasize listening and sharing in conversations.

Men: Use pauses in conversation for emphasis.

Women: Use intensifiers like "really", "terrifically", "tremendously" or emphasis.

Men: Speak mostly in monotones.

Women: Use a variety of tones of voice to convey emotion and meaning.

Men: Display emotion indirectly.

Women: Verbalize feelings directly.

Men: Interrupt more in conversations.

Women: Are interrupted more in conversations.

Men: Speak authoritatively regardless of the subject.

Women: Speak in tentative terms, such as "maybe", "sort of", and "I guess".

By understanding one another's language, men and women can communicate more easily and more effectively.

Healthy Communication Hints

- Actions speak louder than words. Nonverbal communication is much more powerful than verbal communication.
- Define what is important and emphasize it. Define what is not important and ignore it.
- Be clear and specific in your communication.
- Discuss one problem at a time.
- Test all of your assumptions verbally. Get your partner's okay before you make a decision that involves them.
- Realize that each event can be seen from a different point of view.
- Learn to disagree without destructive arguments.
- Be open and honest about your feelings
- Let the effect, not the intention, of your communication be your guide.
- Do not preach or lecture.
- Do not use excuses, fall for excuses, or give excuses.
- Learn when to use humor and when to be serious. Do not subject your partner to destructive teasing.
- Be aware of the kind of influence you are exerting on others around you.
- Work at monitoring yourself to be aware of how you are coming across when communicating.
- Work towards getting and giving support to others.

Please watch these videos: <https://youtu.be/jIrSA-yZfhs>

<https://youtu.be/mPRUNGGORDo>

Use this model to think about the changes you want to make in your communication style.

Your partner says...	You respond by...	Your new positive response...

Part 7 Questions

1. Communication can do great damage or great enhancement to a relationship.
T
2. There are four parts to communication. F
3. Listening is one of the most important components of communication. T
4. Feedback involves sharing of information rather than giving advice. T
5. Men and women communicate in similar patterns. F
6. It is important to defend yourself when something is said that you feel is false. F
7. Actions speak louder than words. Nonverbal communication is much more powerful than verbal communication. T
8. When communicating with another person, it is important to be clear with yourself about what you want to say. T
9. The meaning of any message is given by

Part 8-BECOMING ASSERTIVE

Understanding Assertiveness

Please watch this video- <https://youtu.be/jI7FqqFxx0I>

WHEN YOU ARE	PASSIVE (Lose/Win)	PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE (Kind of win/lose)
You are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotionally dishonest Indirect inhibited, reactive Self-denying (silent martyr) Blaming, apologetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotionally dishonest Indirect, self-denying at first Self-enhancing at expense of others later on
Your feelings are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not okay, you're not okay I'm not okay, but you're okay Hurt and anxious Victimized Possibly angry later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconfident Manipulative Fearful Later angry and revengeful
Beliefs about yourself:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have to be perfect I'm worthless I don't count Others are more important than I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't trust anyone I can outsmart anyone to get my needs met I am going to get what I want and by any means
WHEN YOU ARE	AGGRESSIVE (Win/lose)	ASSERTIVE (Win/win)
You are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriately honest and direct Overly expressive and attacking Blaming, controlling Self-enhancing at the expense of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriately honest Direct and expressive while being empathic to the other person Self-confident Self-enhancing but not at the expense of others
Your feelings are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm okay, you're not okay I'm not okay, you're not okay Righteous, superior Deprecatory at the time, guilty later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful of self Respectful of others Respectful of commitments to relationships
Beliefs about yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am entitled I must have control I have to look out for myself The world revolves around me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am happy because I can meet my own goals I can take of myself but can ask for help if I need it I can control myself and my attitudes about events

Following are examples of how each of the styles may respond to the provocative statement: "Your ideas are stupid and immature"

PASSIVE: "Uh, I guess you're right...I don't know too much"

PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE: You say nothing, but then stand the person up for a date, later saying you "just forgot"

AGGRESSIVE: "Go to hell! We all know your I.Q. is below normal because your mother was a dirty @#*"

ASSERTIVE: "I don't feel you know me well enough to make that judgment. Right or wrong I have a right to my own opinion"

As you learn to understand the emotions that are directing your actions, you have the ability to re-direct the path you walk. Take some time to write down some of your most extreme behaviors in a relationship. Evaluate whether you were aggressive, passive, passive aggressive or assertive.

Which of the previous labels best describes you in your current relationship?

Have you been different in previous relationships?

The most aggressive action I have done in my life is:

The most aggressive thing I have said in my life is:

The most passive behavior I have displayed is:

The most passive-aggressive action I have done is:

The most assertive action I have done in my life is:

Areas/situations where I am: aggressive/passive/passive-aggressive/assertive:

REMEMBER: Realize that as you try these new positive behaviors, you will probably feel uncomfortable and awkward. Other people may also feel uncomfortable with your changes, but it is a necessary step for you to grow.

A time of day when I have most patience to listen to others: (include why):

A time of day when I have least amount of patience to listen to other (include why):

Any other times that make it difficult for me to really listen to another person (For example:

When I'm sick; when I've been up taking care of a sick child; when I have an important project due at work; when I am having pre-menstrual symptoms):

Part 8 Questions

1. Being an assertive person is a healthy behavior. T
2. Assertive people always get their way. F
3. Passive-aggressive behavior is a way of avoiding situations. T
4. Sometimes it is smart to be passive. T
5. Aggressive behavior means that someone wants to win at any cost. T

Part 9-Dealing with Conflict and Learning How To Solve Problems Effectively

LOOKING AT MY RELATIONSHIP

Fill the boxes below in terms of your relationship

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

These will help you understand some of the ways you handle conf

Conflicts happen in all relationships. They are supposed to-conflicts are/can be potential learning opportunities for the partners in the relationship. Many of us believe that a "good" relationship has no conflicts, and that a conflict means that the relationship is in trouble. In healthy relationships that is not the case at all.

We have choices in life. We can and we will have conflicts with others and with ourselves. When we avoid dealing with these conflicts, we run the risk of internalizing the problems and having the conflicts rage inside of us. This can cause both physical and emotional problems.

Take some time and jot down what you were taught about solving conflicts. How did you see problems handled in your family while growing-up? Were conflicts dealt with effectively? Or did they mean a lot of stress for the entire family?

Now think about those same questions in terms of your partner? What are the similarities and what are the differences that you both brought into your relationship?

Conflicts happen when rules of relationships are challenged or broken. All relationships have rules. The rules come from and are formed by things we bring in from our earlier lives, our experiences up to now, and our value systems. In relationships, rules center around:

- Money
- Children
- Recreation
- Who is in charge of what
- Chores
- Sex
- How to spend free time
- Religion
- Who makes what decisions
- Friends

What kinds of conflicts do you have in your relationship in these areas? Can you define the rules both of you have about these areas?

Other areas to think about are; the rules you and your partner feel the most strongly about, areas where there are clashes, the reasons for those clashes, and how those clashes get resolved.

What are the easiest conflicts for you and your partner to resolve? What are the most difficult conflicts for you and your partner to resolve?

Remember: The most easily resolved conflicts are about what rule to follow. The most difficult conflicts to resolve center on "whose" rule is the one to follow (Haley, 1991).

How does this apply to your relationship?

Questions to consider

1. What kinds of things do you and your partner have conflicts about?
2. What normally happens in a conflict with you and your partner?
3. Are there any conflicts in your relationship that you and your partner do not/will not deal with? If yes, what are they? What are the reasons for not dealing with them? What kinds of problems does this cause in your relationship?
4. What changes do you need to make in how you handle conflicts in your life?
5. What kinds of things do you and your partner have conflicts about?
6. What normally happens in a conflict with you and your partner?

Finding Solutions

Good and effective conflict management means finding a solution where both sides can feel that they have won-and that the relationship is intact-hopefully even stronger.

The only possible downside of this can be that you won't get 100% of what you want. (But remember, in the old way of "win or lose" there was always a chance of getting 100% of nothing.) An effective way of dealing with conflicts in any relationship is to look for possible compromises. Compromise is an important aspect of relationships. The most successful relationships are those where the partners are willing and able to compromise with each other.

What does compromising mean to you?

A good compromise works at making all parties happy, a "win/win" situation. In a good compromise, the best of both situations are hopefully combined into a whole. When making a compromise it is important to ask yourself the following questions:

- What am I willing to give up?
- What do I feel that I can't give up?
- What do I want from my partner?
- Is there anything that I can put off in what I want?
- How important is this to me-to the others involved in this situation?
- What can I do that would make the others in this situation happy?
- What would I like my partner to do to make me happy?
- If I give in, am I going to make others pay for it later?
- Do I feel that I am always the one to give in?

Please remember!!! Many times when there is a conflict going on in the relationship, what is being dealt with is not what is really the problem. Some conflicts are smokescreens for bigger problems. The more that a relationship has "stuffed"; the more likely it will be that the "apparent" conflict is not the "real" conflict. Go back to the description at the beginning of this chapter. If the going out with buddy's problem has been a long-standing pattern, the real conflict may not be about the going out with buddies, but rather, that one partner feels that friends are more important to the other partner than the relationship.

Whenever you are dealing with a conflict, take some time to look at what the real issue is. The more you focus on the real issues, the more chance of getting and keeping quality in the relationship. In making compromises, it is important to have as much information about all of the desired outcomes as possible. When we have this information, it becomes easier to make decisions about what to do.

- Each person needs to be able to let the other know what is very important about the situation.
- Each person also needs to let the other know what he or she would be willing to give up in order to come to an agreeable compromise.

It often helps to write the situations down and brainstorm different ways that each could get as much of what they want. Looking at how things can be done differently, what can be done later, what can be combined, and what can be delegated are good ways of coming to decisions.

If one person gives up more than the other, what are the benefits going to be? (For example, will that person get more on the next compromise, or will the other person do something special for them). If you expect something back for giving up something, it is very important to let your partner know. When we make successful compromises, our relationships grow stronger, and deeper. Trust is enhanced because each partner feels that the other is willing to give something up for them and is concerned about what is important to them.

Compromises are important in relationships because they help stop power struggles. Power struggles-when one person wants or demands more power in a relationship than another-happen in all relationships. Power struggles can damage or even ruin relationships, so it is important to recognize them when they happen, deal with them immediately, and move on.

As you work on solving conflicts in your relationship, remember:

- Actions speak louder than words.
- Non-verbal communication (how you look, act, stand, tone of voice, expression on your face) is much more powerful than verbal communication.
- Be clear and specific in your communications.
- Decide what is important and focus on that. Decide what isn't important and ignore that.
- Test your assumptions before acting on them.
- Don't put a plan into action without your partner's agreement.
- Don't make a decision for your partner without them knowing about it.
- Don't attack when disagreeing.
- Understand that there are always 3 sides to an issue: your side, your partner's side, & reality.
- Respect your partner's side of an issue, even if you don't agree.
- Be honest about your feelings.
- Be aware of how your communication is perceived and make changes as needed.
- Let go of "being right".
- Don't preach, lecture, or nag.
- Don't gloat.
- Don't use or fall for excuses.
- Learn when to use humor and when not to; don't tease or make fun of your partner.
- Don't use your superior abilities (in any area) to get an advantage.
- Be fair, be fair, be fair.
- Don't work hard to win the battle only to lose the war.

Compromise Worksheet

Use one of the identified difficult situations from the above discussion.

The problem situation is (be as detailed as possible: the more information you have, the easier to make a successful compromise):

What I want to happen is (be really honest):

What my partner wants to happen is (be equally honest about this side):

Our "wants" clash by...

The ways that these two situations can work together are:

To make a good compromise, I will give up, or postpone/my partner would like me to give up or postpone:

(How well do these match?)

I can't give up:

My partner is willing to give up or postpone/I would like my partner to give up:

(How well do these match?)

My partner can't give up:

Using the above information, the possible compromises we could have are:

Our agreed-upon compromise is (be very detailed here so each member knows what they are giving up, what they are giving, and what is expected from everyone involved in the situation.):

Feedback: The compromise worked/didn't work because (do this step only when there has been some time to test the compromise):

The strategies listed below can be used to help bring conflicts into focus and to help overcome them. The result will be the development of honest, forthright, and positive relationships with yourself and others.

- **Choose the time and place carefully.** Use your awareness of your partner to know when is the best time to work on solving a problem. Avoid difficult times or public places.
- **Focus on changing behaviors not people.** You can choose two directions in facing a conflict: fix the problem or fix the blame.
- **Agree on something.** Even if the agreement is that you both disagree on this issue, state the agreement. This helps both partners remember that they are "in this together."
- **Use "I" language.** State your case in terms of your own feelings. Own what belongs to you and don't deny any feelings-even if they are embarrassing or seem silly. Keep the focus on the behaviors that need to be changed. This can reduce the number of conflicts, minimize the severity of the conflict, and lead to winning solutions.
- **Figure out where you went wrong and own it.** Owning up to one's mistakes is a very important component of conflict management. How is your behavior

contributing to the problem and what can you do to change it? If you won't acknowledge it, you can't change it.

- **Criticize with precision.** Let the other person know exactly what you are unhappy about. Eliminate statements like "You are a lousy partner"; "You make my life miserable." Instead, let the other person know exactly what they are doing to displease you. Focus on the behaviors and not on the person.
- **When someone attacks...agree.** In dealing with someone who appears to want to attack and hurt you, a good counteroffensive is to simply agree. This tends to defuse the attack and lets the other person know that you are not going to participate in this interaction. If the person persists in making personal attacks, leaving the scene is a good maneuver.
- **Take a time out.** When it seems that the attempt at conflict management is not going anywhere and nothing is being resolved, it is often a good idea to stop for a while. The time out allows emotions to cool and helps both sides to move away from the blaming phase and into the solution phase. Solutions are often difficult to find when anger is high.
- **Have more conflicts.** There are no conflict-free relationships. Many people believe that conflicts in a relationship are a sign of a major breakdown, so they avoid, or cover up the inevitable problems that occur. The result of this is that resentment builds up, the positive aspects of a relationship are undermined and usually there is an eventual blowup. It is much healthier and more productive for the relationship to bring up problems and annoyances-even when they are minor-when they do occur and to deal with them. The result of this is a relationship where honesty prevails and neither side is keeping an accounting of all of the wrongdoings of the other.
- **Find the third option.** In a conflict, there are two sides and two possible solutions-mine and yours. The key to conflict management is to find the third option that will make both of us happy. Remember, this is not a "win-lose" situation, but rather a "win-win" goal.
- **Agree on the future.** Focus the solution on the specific actions that will be taken to solve the problem. What are ways that you can measure the effects of the agreed-upon solution? This demonstrates commitment to the solution and also helps minimize the chances of this conflict happening over and over again; it reinforces the commitment of the partners to one another.
- **Work it out on paper.** When a conflict is brewing, it is often helpful to sit down and work it out on paper before even approaching one's partner. This gives you some time to think the problem through, come up with suggestions for solutions, and to focus on the positive benefits of various solutions. In addition, problems often get dealt with more effectively when a solution is offered along with the problem.

Use the following rules as a guide when dealing with a conflict

"FAIR FIGHT" RULES

I. If possible, set up or ask for an appointment for the discussion.

- A. Have a mutually agreed upon time for the discussion.
- B. Mutually agree on where the discussion will take place. Sometimes it is necessary to have a neutral setting.
- C. Set a time length for the discussion. It is easy to let things get carried out and go on and on-this can result in another conflict-not a solution.
- D. Let your partner know what you want to talk about.

II. Don't hit "below the belt"

- A. Don't call names.
- B. Don't disparage the family or friends of your partner.
- C. Don't threaten, verbally or nonverbally.
- D. Don't use displays of violence.
- D. Don't use physical violence.

III. Use "I" messages

- A. When you use "I" messages, you take responsibility for your feelings.
- B. Don't use global terms such as "always", "never", etc., Focus on the behavior that you are having problems with, let your partner know exactly what you want-you are not vague-and you let them know what the advantages are if the behavior is changed.
- C. An "I" message reduces defensiveness, shows acceptance of responsibility, and retains your share of control of the situation.
- D. A "you" message promotes defensiveness, gives away power, and gives total responsibility for the problem to the other person.

IV. Deal with feelings first.

- A. Become aware of what you are feeling, so you can express them clearly.
- B. Label what you are feeling, verbalize and describe what you feel.
- C. Allow your partner to do the same.

V. Listen

- A. Work to develop an awareness of what the other person is feeling by being responsive to their verbal and nonverbal cues.
- B. Accept their right to feel what they want to feel

VI. Ask for specific action.

- A. Ask for what you want in detail
- B. Ask them what they want, get details
- C. Compromise and negotiate

VII. Take a "time out", if needed

- A. If things get too heated, separate and cool down for a while.
- B. Always let your partner know that you are taking a time out-don't just walk away or put the blame on them. Understand that you will come back to deal with the issue. When you come back, it is important that both of you agree that you are ready to continue the discussion. If not, make an appointment for when the issue will be discussed. Do not let the problem go unresolved, make sure that you as a couple come to a mutual agreement of how the problem is to be resolved.

VIII. Use teamwork.

- A. Don't use problems or issues as weapons to hurt one another.
- B. Work together to use the rules.
- C. Look at problem areas or issues in the relationship as opportunities to develop, grow, and to become stronger together.

IX. Never give up.

(Adapted from Geffner & Mantooh, 2000; Bach & Wyden, 1970)

Hints for getting others to open up

1. Encourage others to open up. Ask questions that show you are interested in what the other person has to say. Pay attention when the other person talks; don't just wait for your turn to talk!
2. Try to discover attitudes. Use questions to elicit the opinion of the other person.
3. Keep to the topic at hand. Don't bring up long buried problems or resentments.
4. Direct the conversation. Others can be focused onto topics by the use of questions. Ask for the information that you want, in the forms of advice, opinions, or suggestions.
5. Handle insults. Resist the urge to fight back. Do not give insult for insult. When this happens, the opportunity to solve the problem is lost.
6. Verify questionable information. Always leave room for clearing up possible misunderstandings. Never presume guilt.
7. Clarify meanings. Don't accept implications, vague references, or hints. Use open-ended questions. Open-ended questions require more thought and give more information.
8. Get the pertinent facts. Don't jump to conclusions, rather, find out what is on the other person's mind.
9. Start with easy questions. Start slowly and build up trust.
10. Stay calm.

11. Preface your questions with the facts that you know. Be willing to be challenged.
12. Ask short questions and seal your lips after each question-give the other person a chance to respond.
13. Let your partner know that you have listened to them. This can be done by giving them eye contact, nodding as they speak, and paraphrasing what they have said when they are finished.

REVIEW

1. Something I understand about my relationship that I didn't know before is...

2. My definition of a "healthy" relationship has changed in the following ways...

3. I am responsible for the following areas of difficulty in my relationship...

4. What I learned about intimacy in my relationship:

5. I have the following new insights about sex and our relationship;

Part 9-Questions

1. Healthy relationships do not have conflicts. F
2. Conflicts happen when rules of relationships are challenged or broken. T
3. The most easily resolved conflicts are about what rule to follow. The most difficult conflicts to resolve center on "whose" rule is the one to follow. T
4. Compromises are not important in relationships. F
5. In a good compromise, the best of both situations are hopefully combined into a whole. T
6. Compromises are important in relationships because they help stop power struggles. T
7. Non-verbal communication (how you look, act, stand, tone of voice, expression on your face) is much more powerful than verbal communication. T
8. Sometimes it is important to take a time-out before dealing with a conflict. T
9. Fair fighting is not necessary in a relationship. F
10. After a conflict is resolved, it is important to "check-in" after some time to see how the resolution is working. T

Part 10-EMPATHY

What is empathy? Empathy is the ability to feel or experience what another person is experiencing, and to understand the impact of the feeling on the person. Empathy is important in relationships because knowing and understanding how someone else is impacted by your behavior can have a powerful impact in how one acts toward others.

It is much more difficult to harm another person when we are aware of the how that harm will impact them. Violence and abuse depersonalize relationships-when we are abusive towards others, we are not concerned about how our behavior impacts or affects them, we are only concerned with getting our point across, getting our way, or hurting back because we feel that we have been hurt.

Please watch: <https://youtu.be/1Ewgu369Jw>
<https://youtu.be/hNEuEO94J1o>
<https://youtu.be/aU3QfyqvHk8>

HOW DOES VIOLENCE AFFECT THE WOMEN?

The woman is likely to feel a lot of anger towards her partner. This may come out in open hostility, but more often in gradual withdrawal and loss of love and caring for her partner. She may no longer trust his ability to control his violence, and she may become so afraid of him, that she cannot tolerate continuing the relationship. Often at this point, she may leave for safety in a battered woman's shelter, seek divorce, or she may demand that he get outside help if they are to continue as a couple. No matter what alternative she chooses, the man must realize that it will take time for her to feel trusting again.

Because of the way women learn to feel responsible for the success of the relationship; the battered woman will often blame herself for her partners' violence and unhappiness. This self-blaming can be made worse by the batterer who also tends to blame her for his violence and unhappiness. The woman tries to do "the right thing" so he doesn't get upset and violent, but she soon discovers that her will become violent no matter what she does. She may be so frustrated that she will eventually become depressed and feel helpless. The woman may develop low self-esteem because of her inability to stop the violence, and also because of his constant criticism, blaming, and put-downs. In an attempt to feel some sense of control over this situation, a woman may become violent herself, either in self-defense or as a way of controlling the time and place of the violent episode.

Many women develop physical problems like back pain, headaches, menstrual problems, and low energy. Some women turn to alcohol or drugs as a way of dealing with their frustration, numbing their emotional pain and lessening the stress of living in a violent relationship.

Some women take out their anger by becoming physically or psychologically abusive towards their kids or to their partner. When this happens, it is important that the woman also get violence counseling.

Questions to consider

1. How do you know when your partner is empathic to you?
2. What kinds of things can you do to show your partner that you care and are interested in how they feel?
3. If you saw or heard violence in your family as a child, how did it impact you? (fears, isolation, staying away from home, not having friends over, protecting mom or dad) Do you see any of these behaviors in your child? How can you help them overcome those fears?

FORGIVENESS as part of empathy

Forgiveness is an important part of empathy. Without forgiveness, relationships get stuck and cannot move past problems.

What forgiveness is not!

It is not forgetting

It is not condoning

It is not absolution

It is not a form of self-sacrifice

It is not a clear-cut, one-time decision.

What forgiveness is!

It is a by-product of an ongoing healing process

It is an internal process

It is a sign of positive self-esteem

It is letting go of the intense emotions attached to incidents from our past

It is recognizing that we no longer need our grudges and resentments

It is no longer wanting to punish the people who hurt us

It is accepting that nothing we do to punish them will heal us

It is freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds

It is moving on

From Simon and Simon, *Forgiveness: How to Make Peace With Your Past and Get On With Your Life...* Warned, 1990

Homework

Write a letter of amends to your partner. The letter must be at least one page. Please be specific about what you think you did to them, how you harmed them, and how you will take measures to ensure that this will never happen again.

Part 10 Questions:

1. Empathy is the ability to feel or experience what another person is experiencing, and to understand the impact of the feeling on the person. T
2. Empathy is not important in a relationship. F
3. Abuse often wears out the ability for a victim to be empathic. T
4. Some women take out their anger by becoming physically or psychologically abusive towards their kids or to their partner. T
5. Because of the way women learn to feel responsible for the success of the relationship; the battered woman will often blame herself for her partners' violence and unhappiness.

Part 11-HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS CHILDREN

Let's look at how trauma can impact children. Children are strongly impacted by exposure to stressful events. Watching, hearing, knowing about a parent or parent's being involved in domestic violence has a strong impact on children. Consider the following facts:

1. In families where there is domestic violence, the rate of child abuse or serious neglect is 1500% higher than the national average.
2. Older children may be harmed when trying to protect their parents.
3. Children in homes where there is domestic violence may "indirectly" receive injuries. Infants are often injured by being held by a parent when the abuser strikes out.
4. Children are often used by the abuser as a means to control the victim.
5. Battering can disrupt children's eating and sleeping patterns. Can cause problems related to inadequate rest and nutrition.
6. Children from abusive homes may have difficulty in making and keeping friends.
7. Children from abusive homes frequently have stress-related physical ailments, such as ulcers, headaches, stomach problems, and rashes.
8. Children from violence homes often experience depression, anxiety, fear, and guilt. They may often blame themselves for the violence.
9. These children may have problems in school.
10. They may be overly aggressive and difficult to control, or unusually passive and withdrawn.
11. Children raised in abusive homes learn that violence is an effective way to resolve conflicts and problems.
12. Children from violent homes have higher risks of alcohol/drug use and juvenile delinquency.
13. A great majority of violent criminals were raised in abusive homes.
14. Domestic violence is a major factor in teen runaways and homeless street youth.
15. Boys who witness their mother's abuse are more likely to batter their female partners as adults than are boys raised in nonviolent homes.

ISSUES FOR CHILDREN IN VIOLENT HOMES

THE CHILDREN FEEL:

POWERLESS BECAUSE THEY CAN'T STOP THE VIOLENCE.

CONFUSED BECAUSE IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

ANGRY BECAUSE IT SHOULDN'T BE HAPPENING.

GUILTY BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG.

SAD BECAUSE IT'S A LOSS.

AFRAID BECAUSE THEY MAY BE HURT, THEY MAY LOSE SOMEONE THEY LOVE OR OTHERS MAY FIND OUT.

ALONE BECAUSE THEY THINK IT'S ONLY HAPPENING TO THEM.

IMPACT OF SECOND-HAND ABUSE:

- Children of violence do not learn boundaries
- Abused children learn extreme behavior
- Battered children learn to harm themselves
- Children of abuse learn how to abuse others
- Violence results in stress, depression, and flashbacks
- Battered children take on adult roles prematurely
- Battering creates isolation
- Family violence results in behavioral problems
- Battering creates low self-esteem
- A violence home means feeling powerless
- Violence creates constant anxiety
- A battering home means living in constant fear
- Battering means emotional abandonment
- Older children see and hear violence
- Battering adversely affects infants and toddlers
- Battering causes damage and distress in the fetus

Questions to consider:

1. If you have children, how do you think the abusiveness has impacted them?
2. If you were raised in an abusive home, what impact do you think that abuse had on you-as an adult and as a child?
3. What do you need to do to help your child recover from the impact of the abusive behavior?

Being a responsible parent:

Children learn what they live and what they experience. Children will do what is done to them, what they see, not what they are told. As parents, we have the responsibility of providing our children with safe, nurturing, and stable lives. The purpose of this exercise is to help you decide what you want your children to have, for those who have older children-to see what impact your behavior has had on your children.

Please answer the following questions:

1. If I were my child, how would I describe me, the parent I am now?

2. What do I want my children to remember about me? What do I think they will remember about me? How can I change this or make it better?

3. How are my children most like/unlike me?

4. When I became a parent, I told myself I would.... I have/have not kept that Promise by...

5. If my daughter told me she was being abuse by the man she loved, I would...

6. If I saw my son abusing a woman, I would...

7. I want my children to remember by by/as...

8. I will be a good parent by doing the following...

9. In order to achieve this, I will have to change, improve...

Please write a letter to your child (children) and tell them what they need to do to have a healthy, loving relationship.

REVIEW

What do you understand about your partner and children that you did not before?

What changes do you need to make to help your children have a happy childhood?

What is the most important thing you need to work on in yourself?

Part 11: Questions

- 1.Children are not affected by violence and abuse in the family. F
- 2.In families where there is domestic violence, the rate of child abuse or serious neglect is 1500% higher than the national average. T
- 3. Violent criminals often come from violent homes. T
- 4. Children often blame themselves for the family violence. T

PART 12
Domestic Violence Relapse Prevention Plan

1. Describe your most serious acts of violence with any partner, spouse, or girlfriend. Be very specific. Tell the setting, the situation, include all persons involved, and build up to the time of the violence.

2. What were your Power & Control Tactics (What were you doing, thinking, and feeling?) Please use the House of Abuse and / or Power & Control Wheels.

3. How did your violence and Power & Control affect your partner and your children?

4. What was the outcome of your actions? Please list both the positive and the negative consequences.

5. If you were in this same situation now, what would you do to not be violent and to work towards a constructive non-violent resolution?

a. What would you be doing, thinking, and feeling?

b. Which tools from the program would you be using? Why?

6. List three types of situations that you become angry at. How will you handle these situations differently since completing the program?

7. Please list your support system and how you will utilize it to no longer use violence, power, and control in your relationship.
