

## "I" statements

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

1. Respect for one's self and the other.
2. Willingness to take responsibility and initiative for one's 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 towards 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 person's 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 of hurting 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, and 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 interpret 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 basic 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 and 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 me more)
  - \* Ask appropriate questions.
  - \* Express interest and empathy.
  - \* Use thinking time effectively.
  - \* Listen for ideas and central themes, not just facts.
  - \* Pay attention to content and not get sidetracked by the delivery or mannerisms of the deliverer.
  - \* Ask themselves "How can I benefit from this conversation?"
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- \* 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 to shut 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 assertive 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. Lets 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 individuals; 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.



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**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 him.
- 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.

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...

# SESSION 21

## BECOMING ASSERTIVE

### SESSION 21

#### Client Handouts

### Understanding Assertiveness

It is quite common for people in our society to accept a man being assertive, but not a woman. An assertive woman is not as common and not always well received. Assertiveness is not the same as aggressiveness, although people confuse them at times.

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

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I must have control</li><li>• I have to look out for myself</li><li>• The world revolves around me</li></ul>	<p>goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can take care of myself but can ask for help if I need it</li><li>• I can control myself and my attitudes about events</li></ul>
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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; for example, throwing out your partner's personal belongings, damaging his property, or attempting to harm yourself. 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:** 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 in order for you to grow.

As you begin making changes in the way you relate to others, you may want to share with the group your discoveries or setbacks. Healthy communication is open, honest, and direct, as well as sensitive to the other person's ability to listen to what you are saying. For example, if you are upset with a co-worker and she shares with you that her father passed away the night before, you will want to communicate your feelings at a later time. She is less likely to be able to "listen" to what you have to say since she has an overwhelming amount of emotions she is dealing with.

This can also be applied to intimate relationships. If your partner is on his way to work and you are upset with him about finances, 15 minutes before he leaves is not the best time to discuss the issue. Recognizing the seriousness of the subject, how much time will most likely be needed for it to be discussed, and when the other person will be more likely to listen are important parts to choosing a time to communicate your feelings.

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 others (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 late taking care of a sick child; when I have an important project due at work; when I am having pre-menstrual symptoms):

## **SESSION 22**

# **Dealing With Conflict and Learning How to Solve Problems Effectively**

### **SESSION 22**

#### **Client Handouts**

## **Dealing With Conflict and Learning How to Solve Problems Effectively**

Conflicts occur in all relationships. They are supposed to -- they are/can be potential learning opportunities for both 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.

Think about what you learned about conflicts when you were growing up. Many females were taught that it is not "feminine" or "ladylike" to have a conflict. Many females were taught to *give in* to males and to find subtle (which often meant manipulative) ways to get what they wanted. The problem with avoiding conflicts is that they don't get resolved and the relationships then build up to a boiling point. This is where violence and abuse happens.

Dealing with conflicts in the early stages has a lot of benefits. The problems are approached when they are new, when they are fresh on the minds of both partners, and the chances of coming to healthy and satisfactory solutions is strong. Allowing problems to continue for a long time sets up patterns and habits that can be difficult to break. In addition, one or both members of the partnership are building up resentments that eventually have to come out -- and when they do, it usually feels like a tornado has hit.

Think about it. Suppose your partner has spent the last five years going to play pool every Saturday night with his buddies. You don't like it, but you haven't said anything about it until one day you just can't handle it anymore. So, what happens? Probably a huge argument in which both of you say things that you don't really mean, that are hurtful to each other, and which can cause damage to the relationship.

In addition, you both probably bring up a lot of things that have been held back and the argument starts to be about a lot of things and not just one issue. The end result is most likely hurt feelings, a damaged relationship, and no resolution of the problem.

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 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 until now, and our value systems. In relationships, rules center around:

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Money                    | ➤ Sex                      |
| ➤ Children                 | ➤ How to spend free time   |
| ➤ Recreation               | ➤ Religion                 |
| ➤ Who is in charge of what | ➤ Who makes what decisions |
| ➤ Chores                   | ➤ 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 between 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 kind 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?

### 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 still 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% or 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 or 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 buddies 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 you have 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 occur when one person wants or demands more power in a relationship than another. 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, etc.) 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 him 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.



WEAVER

## 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 it is to make a successful compromise):

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

What my partner wants to have 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 or postpone:

(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 up to 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 up to 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", or "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 to bring up problems and annoyances (even if they are minor) when they occur and to deal with them. The result of this is a relationship where honesty prevails and neither side is keeping count 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 partners 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 your partner. This gives you some time to think the problem through, come up with suggestions for solutions, and 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 away and go on and on. This can result in another conflict and 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.
  - E. 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, and 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 puts total responsibility for the problem on the other person.
  
- IV. Deal with feelings first.**
  - A. Become aware of what you are feeling, so you can express it 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 and 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 & Mantooth, 2000; Bach & Wyden, 1970)

**Hints for getting others to open up (i.e., to "fight fair"):** The other person needs to feel safe and heard so some tips on how to encourage this process are provided below. The more we know about what a person wants and needs, the better we are able to reach a comfortable and fair solution.

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. Stick 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.

1

2

3

## **PART 5: FAMILY ISSUES**

### **SESSION 23 Family Album**

#### **SESSION 23 Client Handout**

### **Family Album**

The purpose of this exercise is to make your family real to you and to the rest of the group members --- what they look like, what they like to do, and how you all fit together. You are introducing the rest of the group to your family. Do the best and most responsible job that you can so that all of the other group members will have a better knowledge of who your family is and what it is all about.

Please gather pictures of your family:

1. The family you have created as an adult.
2. The family you grew up in.

Bring an assortment of pictures that tell something about you and your family, what kinds of things you did and do, the places you like to go to, vacations, special people and occasions.

In group, be prepared to share these pictures and help the other group members gain a feel for your family and what it means to you. As you share these pictures with the rest of the group, put yourself in the place of each family member at the time of each picture and be prepared to tell what was going on in the family at that time.

Imagine what the scenario would be like if you were missing from the pictures. What would be different for all of the other family members? For you?

As you listen to other group members, this is your opportunity to get to know people you have only heard about until now. Ask questions about getting to know the partner, and about things you may have assumed versus things that may not be true. At all times maintain respect and ask only questions that will help the group member understand herself better.

# SESSION 24

## Domestic Violence and Children: Parenting Issues

### SESSION 24 Client Handouts

### Children and Domestic Violence

Children deserve to live in secure environments. They deserve to feel safe in their homes, and they need examples of positive living skills to help them become effective and positive adults. Sadly, children are often another battleground of a relationship. Children may be used by partners against one another as a way of hurting or controlling one another. Examples of this are threats of not being able to see one's child, attempts at turning a child against a parent by the other parent, and allowing a child to witness/be exposed to differences between their parents such that they are put in the middle of the arguments or used as "pawns."

In addition, children often just "get in the way" where there is violence occurring. They may be hit by thrown objects, pushed by someone who is not watching what they are doing, or hit by accident. Children often get hurt because they attempt to "stop" the problems between their parents and they may take a hit that was meant for someone else.

Children may also attempt to deflect their parent's attention from each other by being "bad." They may act out in several ways and work to direct attention towards themselves as a way of stopping the abuse between their parents. For most children, the goal is to have Mommy and Daddy love each other and be there for them. Parents represent the safety of the world for children, and when they are not stable the child is not stable.

Many parents think their children do not know of the problems that exist between them. They think that they do an effective job of hiding their problems and of putting on a front for the children. This is usually not the case. **KIDS KNOW AND SENSE WHEN THERE ARE PROBLEMS.** They are very good at "feeling" the tension and the unrest. And, because no one is admitting that there is a problem, they often feel confused because of the mixed messages they are receiving.

Another issue for children in violent and abusive homes is that they often get overlooked. Parents are often so busy dealing with the problems between themselves that they have little time to attend to the needs of the children.

#### **EFFECTS ON CHILDREN WHO LIVE WITH VIOLENCE IN THEIR HOME**

Failure to thrive symptoms, including lack of appropriate growth, low attention span, being withdrawn, and not meeting growth and development levels in a timely manner  
General aggressiveness



## WEAVER

Patterns of over-compliance and fearfulness  
Low self-esteem  
Fear and distrust of close relationships  
Conflict about taking sides with parents  
Confusion over right and wrong behavior  
Psychosomatic complaints  
Problems relating to authority  
Likely to repeat the patterns they learned

### **REACTIONS OF CHILDREN TO PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA**

Children are tremendously impacted by exposure to stressful events. Watching, hearing, and knowing about one's parents 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 very much greater 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 "there" when the abusers strike out.
4. Children are often used by the abusers as a means to control the victim.
5. Battering can disrupt children's eating and sleeping patterns, and cause problems related to inadequate rest and nutrition.
6. Children from abusive homes frequently have stress-related physical ailments, such as ulcers, headaches, tummy aches, and rashes
7. Children from violent homes often experience depression, anxiety, fear, and guilt. They may often blame themselves for the violence.
8. These children may have problems in school. They may be overly aggressive and difficult to control, or unusually passive and withdrawn.
9. Children from abusive homes may have difficulty making and keeping friends.
10. Children raised in abusive homes learn that violence is an effective way to resolve conflicts and problems.
11. Children from violent homes have higher risks of alcohol/drug abuse and juvenile delinquency.
12. A great majority of violent criminals were raised in abusive homes.
13. Domestic violence is a major factor in teen runaways and homeless street youth.
14. Boys who are exposed to their mother's abuse are more likely to abuse their female partners as adults than boys raised in nonviolent homes.

**Children who are exposed to or suffer from trauma require special attention to deal with the after effects of the trauma. Children exposed to domestic violence show similar symptoms as children who survive natural disasters. For these children, the violence is a disaster.**

### **TYPICAL REACTIONS TO TRAUMA FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES INCLUDE**

- \*Fears of future disasters
- \*Loss of interest in school
- \*Regressive behavior
- \*Sleep disturbance and night terrors
- \*Fears of natural events associated with the disaster

## REACTIONS OF SPECIFIC AGE GROUPS

Different age groups of children tend to be vulnerable to the stress of disaster in unique ways. Below we have summarized typical responses for different age groups, and suggested ways to respond to them.

### PRE-SCHOOL (AGES 1-5)

Typical responses in this age group include:

- Thumbsucking
- Bedwetting
- Fears of the darkness or animals
- Clinging to parents
- Night terrors
- Loss of bladder or bowel control; constipation
- Speech difficulties
- Loss or increase in appetite

Children in this age group are particularly vulnerable to the disruption of their previously secure world. Because they generally lack the verbal and conceptual skills necessary to cope effectively with sudden stress themselves, they look to family members for comfort. They are often strongly affected by reactions of parents and other family members. Abandonment is a major fear in this age group and children who have lost family members or even pets or toys will need special reassurance.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD (AGES 5-11)

Common responses in this age group include:

- Irritability
- Whining
- Clinging
- Aggressive behavior at home or school
- Overt competition with younger siblings for parents' attention
- Night terrors, nightmares, fear of darkness
- School avoidance
- Withdrawal from peers
- Loss of interest and poor concentration in school

Regressive behavior is most typical of this group. Loss of pets or prized objects is particularly difficult for them to handle.

### PREADOLESCENT (AGES 11-14)

Common responses in this age group are:

- Sleep disturbance
- Appetite disturbance
- Rebellion in the home
- Refusal to do chores
- School problems (fighting, withdrawal, loss of interest, attention-seeking behaviors)

## WEAVER

- Physical problems (headaches, vague aches and pains, skin eruptions, bowel problems, psychosomatic complaints)
- Loss of interest in peer social activities

Peer reactions are especially significant in this age group. The child needs to feel that his/her fears are both appropriate and shared by others. Responses should be aimed at lessening tensions, anxieties and possible guilt feelings.

## ADOLESCENT (AGES 14-18)

Common responses in this age group include:

- Psychosomatic symptoms (rashes, bowel problems, asthma)
- Headaches and tension
- Appetite and sleep disturbance
- Hypochondriasis
- Menstrual problems
- Agitation or decrease in energy level; apathy
- Decline in interest in the opposite sex
- Irresponsible and/or delinquent behavior
- Decline in emancipatory struggles over parental control
- Poor concentration

Most of the activities and interest of the adolescent are focused in his/her own age-group peers. They tend to be especially distressed by the disruption of their peer group activities and the lack of access to full adult responsibilities in community efforts.

## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES AS AN ABUSED CHILD BECOMES AN ADULT

1. An inability to trust.
2. Often displays very manipulative behavior.
3. Avoids being vulnerable.
4. Very often is an over-achiever. However, they are rarely happy with their accomplishments.
5. May have series of relationships, which are usually very unsatisfactory and have difficult endings. Unconsciously, they may be looking for someone to take care of them.
6. Depression, of a long-standing duration, is very common.
7. These can be very angry people, with limited skills on how to appropriately discharge their anger.
8. Very often, these people display addictive behaviors. Eating disorders may be closely related to having suffered abuse as a child.

## CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

All children shall enjoy the following inalienable rights:

- The right to be treated as important human beings, with unique feelings, ideas and desires, and not as a source of argument between parents.
- The right to a sense of security and belonging derived from a loving and nurturing environment which shelters them from harm.
- The right to a continuing relationship with both parents and the freedom to receive love from and express love for both.
- The right to "listening parents"
- The right to express love and affection for each parent without having to stifle that love because of fear of disapproval by the other parent.
- The right to grow and flourish in an atmosphere free of exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
- The right to know that their parents' decisions to divorce is not their responsibility and that they will still be able to live with each parent.
- The right to continuing care and guidance from both parents in which they can be educated in mind, nourished in spirit, and developed in body, in an environment of unconditional love.
- The right to honest answers to questions about changing family relationships.
- The right to know and appreciate what is good in each parent without one parent degrading the other.
- The right to have a relaxed, secure relationship with both parents without being placed in a position to manipulate one parent against the other.
- The right to have one parent not undermine time with the other parent by suggesting tempting alternatives or by threatening to withhold activities with the other parent as punishment for the child's wrongdoing.
- The right to be able to experience regular and consistent parental contact and the right to know the reason for not having regular contact.
- The right to be a kid and to be insulated from the conflict and problems of parents.
- The right to be taught, according to their developmental levels, to understand values, to assume responsibility for their actions, and to cope with the just consequences of their choices.
- The right to be able to participate in their own destiny.

(From Oddenino, 1995)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

My child(ren) are ages \_\_\_\_\_. The abusiveness in my relationship started when they were ages: \_\_\_\_\_.

I have seen the following signs of distress from them:

My children have been exposed to the following (please describe as much of the violence and abuse as possible that you are aware of your child(ren) being exposed):

When they were exposed to the abuse and violence, they responded in the following ways:

Using the information above, please develop a plan for helping your child(ren) deal with the stresses in his/her/their life. What can you do to make their lives more secure and comfortable, to help them recover from the impact of the abuse?

If you were raised in an abusive home, what impact do you think that abuse had on you, both as a child and as an adult? Do you remember what and how you felt, and how you dealt with it emotionally, physically, and mentally? Who were you angry at? How did you express that anger? What were the consequences of the abusive behavior on you or your siblings? Who was the actual "parent" to you or your siblings? Was it you, one of your parents, a relative, or a sibling? What have been the consequences of those experiences, as you became an adult -- choosing a partner, dealing with anger, being aware/unaware of abusive behavior, etc.?

What similarities do you see between you and your child in terms of the above question?

How do you want your child to remember you as a parent? What do you need to do to make that happen?

**HOMEWORK**

Write a letter to your child telling them how to have a happy relationship:

What feelings did writing this letter bring up for you?

*Remember. It is important to take care of yourself too.*

## PART 6: INTIMACY ISSUES

### SESSION 25

## Intimacy: What Does It Mean?

### SESSION 25

### Client Handouts

## WHAT IS INTIMACY?

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

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

In addition, the closer we get to another person the more likely it becomes that they will let us down or that we will let them down. It works like this: the closer we get to another person and the closer we allow them to be to us, the more we want from them, the more they want from us, and the more chances there are that there will be times when we won't be able to give them what they want and need and vice versa. This is because there will be times when we/they don't have the resources, energy, time, or even desire to fulfill the needs and desires of another person no matter how important they are to us.

**So, how does intimacy begin? Usually it starts with attraction and then moves from there. What attracts us to others?**

- Physical proximity and familiarity. We tend to be attracted to people we are close to, both in physical closeness and in who we know.
- Having needs satisfied. The more our needs are satisfied by another person, the more attractive they become to us.
- Being similar. Very often we tend to be attracted to people whom are like us in values, behaviors, and hopes.
- Being opposite. We may also be attracted to others who are unlike us, most often in areas where we feel inadequate, such as a shy person being attracted to someone who is outgoing, a passive person who is attracted to someone who is assertive, and so on.
- Doing for others. When someone does something nice for us, we are often more attracted to them. And on the opposite side, doing something for someone else can often make them more attractive to us.
- Physical attractiveness. This is often the first line of attraction. But remember, we all have our own individual ideas of what is attractive and what is not attractive.
- Self-esteem. Most people are attracted to individuals who have strong self-esteem. However, we usually end up with partners who have similar levels of self-esteem to ours.

## 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 another person is willing to give to us. What someone else wants us to give us or wants to give us 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) tages of a Relationship

1. **Sampling.**

This stage involves checking out the possibilities and then deciding on a person with whom you would like to develop a relationship. This involves thinking about how satisfying a relationship with this person might be. It is usually based on a small amount of information. Conversations with the other person are usually kept at a very superficial level at this stage.

2. **Bargaining.**  
At this time the couple is beginning to work on mutually satisfying ways of interacting. The couple is trying to get to know each other better and to develop a pattern of being together. "Me" and "we" can often get confused at this point. The danger is giving up too much of oneself in order to please the other.
3. **Commitment.**  
This stage involves making a mutual decision to spend time together as exclusive partners. This is a more intimate stage.
4. **Institutionalization.**  
This is an extension of the commitment stage. It involves making a formal statement about the relationship-i.e. marriage etc. The couple is making a formal and public declaration of their commitment to one another.
5. **Coming apart.**  
This is a stage where the relationship is no longer working and both members may be feeling some anxiety. It is characterized by increased arguments and disagreements and decreased enjoyment with one another. Both members may begin to look outside of the relationship to get their needs met. This is the time when outside help may be needed to resolve the problems. Not every relationship goes through this, although many relationships do experience a form of this stage as they go through transition times.
6. **Putting it back together again.**  
This is a time of recommitment and re-energizing of the relationship. Both members of the relationship become aware of how important this relationship is or is not to them. This may also be a time when both sides become aware of the damaged areas of the relationship (i.e. trust) and begin to become aware of the effort, energy and time that it will take to repair. This can be a very fruitful and rewarding time and also frustrating as problem areas are dealt with.

(Adapted from Geffner & Mantooth, 2000)

## **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?

How do I know my partner loves me? What does it feel like? How do I know that my partner feels loved by me?

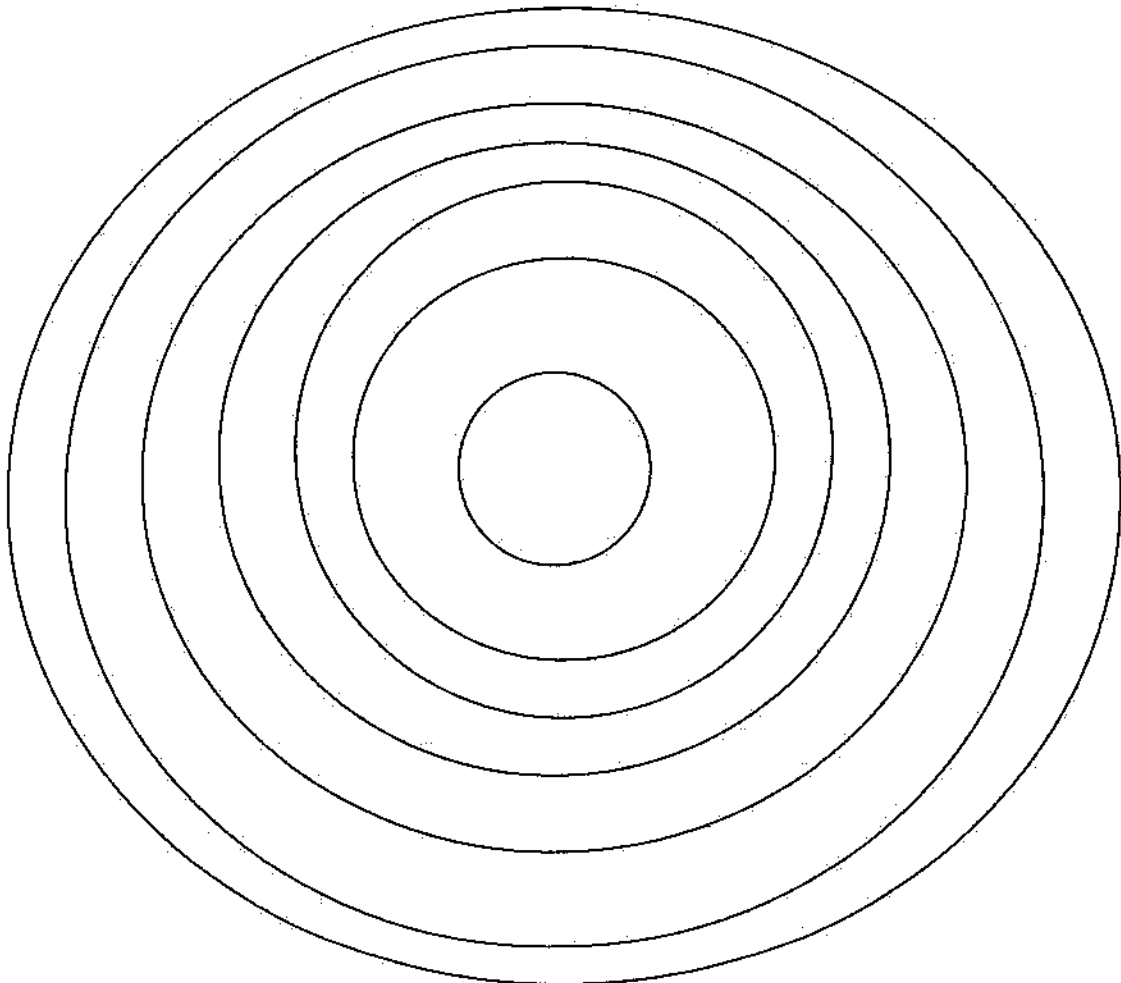
## Letting Go

We all have to learn to let go in order to have healthy relationships. Because we will not get everything we want or need from another person, we need to learn to not hold grudges, to not want to get even, and to be able to move forward in our relationships -- or to get out of a relationship that is not good for us.

What angers and resentments am I holding on to that I need to let go of in order to have a stronger and healthier relationship, both with others and with myself?

## 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. Put all of the people in your lives somewhere on this circle based upon the degree of intimacy you have with them.



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

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

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?

How well populated is your circle right now?

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?

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

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

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

# SESSION 26

## Understanding Love

### SESSION 26

#### Client Handouts

### About Love

Establishing a loving relationship may be the most difficult, yet most rewarding experience you will participate in during your lifetime. Understanding what your concept of love is can be the first step in developing and establishing the depth and range of any new relationship. Answer the following questions to get a better view of what love means to you.

#### How does LOVE feel to you?

How was love verbally expressed in your family of origin?

Adult to Adult

Child to Child

Parent to Child

How was love physically expressed in your family?

Adult to Adult

Child to Child

Parent to Child

Who has been someone in your life that has made you feel the most loved?

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How did this person convey that love to you?

What type of touching makes you feel loved?

What types of gifts make you feel loved?

What words make you feel loved?

What types of actions by others makes you feel loved?

What activities do you most enjoy with people you feel loved by?

Developing healthy, loving relationships is not limited to partners in a sexual relationship. It is important to learn how to develop healthy, loving relationships with your children, your friends and your partner/family if possible. You cannot change other people, but in new relationships you can establish new boundaries and guidelines to direct how intimate the

relationship will become. Especially with children, it is important to be a positive role model of an emotionally healthy person and relationship. After all, we all learn from what we live with and what we see others do.

## **The Languages of Love**

Gary Chapman & Ross Campbell's book *The Five Love Languages of Children* describes different ways to express love to our children. They are:

1. **Physical touch**- hugs, kisses, tickling, and stroking of hair are some examples.
2. **Words of Affirmation**- "I believe in you", "You are so special", "You are so smart/ strong/ sensitive"
3. **Quality Time**- playing together, doing projects, reading.
4. **Gifts**- purchasing or making something they desire.
5. **Acts of Service**- sewing their buttons on their shirts, making dinner, and washing their clothes (Chapman & Campbell, 1997).

We can use the same premise to look at other relationships. The five spheres can be seen as a guideline in any relationship. There may be one or two of the spheres that you feel most comfortable with and others that may seem foreign to you. It is most likely that how you learned to identify love as a child is the way you feel most comfortable expressing as an adult. You may realize that you have limited your relationships by only loving in one way or another. Although you may have made some unhealthy choices, blaming yourself will do nothing to help you.

Learning from your mistakes and becoming a better person will be good use of your energies. The challenge for you will be to expand your ways of loving yourself and others.

Part of learning new ways of loving others is also understanding that everyone has preferences on how they like to be loved. You may find yourself in friendships and intimate relationships with adults who have no knowledge of all five spheres. Begin every relationship by asking how they like to feel appreciated instead of using trial and error.

## **My Love Language**

Think of a friend or partner that you feel you know well and answer the following questions:

Name:

This person most enjoys doing this activity with me:

The best compliment I can give this person is:



The way this person likes to be touched is:

The way I can best demonstrate I care for them is:

The type of gift this person most appreciates is:

You may want to explain to this person what you have learned about love and ask them the questions above without showing them your answers. Were you able to successfully define their language of love? People often change ideas and beliefs as they mature, just as children do as they grow.

It is important to always nurture your relationships by monitoring what is important to them at different times in their life. What's important to a three year old (i.e.-playing together) is different for a fifteen year old (i.e.-clothes), and being able to stay connected with this is sometimes challenging.

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrot wrote in their book *Relationships* that smart love forms when two people share the same ideas, values, and desires. It is impossible to find a carbon copy of yourself but finding someone who shares most of the ideas that are important to you makes it easier to establish guidelines and rules for the relationship. **Love forgives** and is not jealous. **Love is patient and kind. Love does not delight in harm** to another and is truthful. **Love does not boast** and it endures. **Love, quite simply, is a verb** (Parrott & Parrott, 1998).

You may choose to stop loving someone if they hurt you or you may choose to continue loving someone in spite of them hurting you. This is a choice that you make when you want to be closer/connected with a person.

Love does not look the same at every given moment in a relationship; it may be stronger or weaker at times, like the tide. Love rises and falls, and it is your job to make sure you give the right dose at the right time.

When have you loved someone who has hurt you? Was it hard to let go?

When have you decided to stop loving someone? How did you accomplish it?

Who has been someone that you wanted to stop loving but has been difficult to let go of emotionally? Why do you think it's been difficult?

**Journal Topic:** Who have I let go of that I regret? Why did I let go of them and for what reasons do I regret it?

# SESSION 27

## Understanding and Meeting Your Own Needs

### SESSION 27

#### Client Handouts

### Understanding and Meeting Your Own Needs

We all have needs. Whether healthy or unhealthy, they are what drive us to do things. Our needs may vary over time as the circumstances of our lives change. However, we all have some of the same basic needs:

- The need to survive and reproduce.
- The need for power.
- The need to belong, to love, to share, and to cooperate.
- The need for freedom.
- The need for fun.

(from Glaser, 1989)

How have you taken care of these needs in your life so far?

Much of our lives are spent in working to get our needs met. Many relationships are formed for the purpose of meeting needs. Although we change as time passes and as we meet or fail to meet the challenges of our lives, many of our needs may remain constant. The more we know about what we need, the better we can arrange our relationships to meet those needs, the better we can choose a partner who will fit those needs, and the more active we can move in the right direction to make sure that the needs are taken care of.

Problems in relationships often come about because of unmet needs, of clashing needs between partners, and because a person is not really sure about what they do need.

Very often there is a difference between men and women's needs. Let's look at some of the differences: (Gray, 1992).

- Women need caring, men need trust.
- Women need understanding, men need acceptance.
- Women need respect, men need appreciation.
- Women need devotion, men need admiration.

- Women need validation, men need approval.
- Women need reassurance, men need encouragement.
- A man's sense of self is defined through his ability to achieve results; a woman's sense of self is defined through her feelings and the quality of her relationships.

Do you see your relationship in any of these? How do these differing needs affect your relationship? How have you handled these conflicts in the past? What changes do you need to make?

Take some time to assess yourself and list as many of your needs as you can identify. Think about the following as guides in developing your own personal needs list.

How much alone time do I need? How often do I need reassurance? How much control do I need in my relationships? What kinds of challenges do I like and do I not like? How much recognition do I need? How much do I want to be the leader and how much do I want to be the follower? How do I like criticism delivered? How do I like to be praised?

The next thing to think about is where you learned those needs. We may have needs because of what we learned during our childhoods, because of what we did and didn't get during our childhoods, or because of ways that we are protecting ourselves. These needs may decide who we choose to be with, and how we choose to be in our relationships.

Once you have begun to figure out what you need in your life, it is time to move on and begin to think about what you need in the relationships in your life. In doing the following exercise, take into consideration not only the primary relationship in your life, but some of the other relationships in your life as well.

What needs do I have in a relationship (examples might be love, companionship, trust, excitement, etc.)?

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The needs that have not been met by my relationship are:

I have taken care of those unmet needs met by:

These behaviors have damaged/helped my relationship in the following ways:

If I could only choose three of my chosen important needs to have, which ones would I choose and why?

What are some things I can do to get the other needs met in my relationship?

As my relationship has progressed though different stages and times, my needs have changed in the following ways:

## **UNDERSTANDING MY NEEDS HOMEWORK**

How is your marriage similar to your parents' relationship? What is different from your parents?

When and where do you and your partner do your best talking? (This may change over the years as the configuration of the family changes)

How do you think you share feelings? How does your partner share their feelings? Do you have to guess or does s/he let you know what they are experiencing when they are experiencing it?

What is the best time of the day/week/month/year for your relationship? Why?

What kind of quality time do you have? How often, what happens, how or who makes it happen, and is it spontaneous or planned?

How would you rewrite your marriage vows?

How much/how often do you and your partner play? What do you do?

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How do you feel loved (i.e., how do you know that your partner loves you)?

What do you want your partner to do to show you that he/she loves you?

How much touching is there in your relationship? Is it exclusively sexual? Would you like any changes in this area? If so, what and how?

What are your 10 highest priorities in life?

What are 10 things you like to do to have fun?

When was the last time you did any one of them? With who and where? What stops you from doing more?

How do you and your partner reconnect at the end of a day? How do you debrief (if you do at all) with each other?

How do you let your partner know what you need from them? How do you know what your partner needs from you? What changes would you like be made in these areas?

# SESSION 28

## About Sex

### SESSION 28

#### Client Handouts

### 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 (if you were molested as a child, include how do you think it affected your view of sex, then describe the first sexual experience that you chose to have):

Sex is important to me because:

I think masturbation is:

I feel attractive when:



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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:

I think sex should only happen 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:

I think that men think sex is:

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

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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:

When is it too soon to have sex (and why)?

One-night stands are:

Sex without protection is:

Do 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 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.

For some people sex may be a challenge because of childhood molestation, rape or other trauma. It may be necessary for you to seek treatment for these if it seems overwhelming for you. Other individuals may suffer from physical limitations to engage in sexual activity.

One example is vaginismus, a condition in which the vagina tightens and makes sex painful. If sex is painful, seek medical attention to identify if it is either a physical or psychological condition. Pregnancy and menstruation also affect sexual functioning and mood levels. Having a diagnosis of AIDS, HIV, or genital warts are also conditions that influence how often or with whom you are sexual with.

Sex is a process of negotiating with your partner so that both feel heard, respected and nurtured through intimacy (which is not always sexually). After completing this section, would you change any of your previous answers? 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 him:

Ways in which I can be aroused without being touched:

Ways in which I can convey my desire for sex:

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**“Sex without intimacy is sex. Sex with intimacy is phenomenal”.**

Challenge yourself to develop other levels of intimacy

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:

I think that men think sex is:

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

# **PART 7: RELAPSE PREVENTION**

## **SESSION 29 Letting Go**

### **SESSION 29 Client Handouts**

#### **Letting Go**

Part of making changes in your life is also accepting that some situations are unhealthy for you and must be let go of. As part of your new belief system, you may have already begun the process of letting go of unhealthy beliefs, unhealthy behaviors, old resentments, or even past partners.

#### **WHAT IS NOT LETTING GO?**

- Having my self-worth wrapped up in what another person does, says, thinks, or feels.
- Being unaware and out of touch with reality.
- Believing that I am responsible for another person and that I can change them.
- Being addicted to another person's behavior (compulsiveness).

#### **HOW DO I FEEL WHEN I DON'T LET GO?**

Angry	Resentful
Blaming	Tired
Guilty	Hopeless
Hurt	Disappointed
Afraid (I Won't Be Able To Control Things)	Insecure
Depressed	Responsible
Trapped	Tight
Inadequate	

#### **HOW DO I BEHAVE WHEN I DON'T LET GO?**

Rescue	Protect
Give Advice	Try And Find A Solution To Fix Things
Don't Listen	Try To Control
Manipulate	Carry The Feelings Of Others
Blame Others And Accept Blame	Hold My Feelings
Ignore My Feelings	Don't Move Forward In My Own Life

#### **WHY DO I NEED TO LET GO?**

To understand how I help others avoid facing reality	To find ways of nurturing my own self-worth
--	---

To be in touch with my feelings, to be congruent  
To be able to look at my own behavior

To accept reality, myself, and the other person  
To be in touch with my spiritual side

### HOW DO I FEEL WHEN I LET GO?

Comfortable  
Free  
High Self Worth  
Caring  
Responsible For Myself  
At Peace With The World, God And Others

Relaxed  
Aware  
Full Of Energy  
Adequate  
Loving  
Secure

### HOW DO I BEHAVE WHEN I LET GO?

I share my feelings (level)

Show empathy

Let others be responsible for the consequences of their actions

Confront the behaviors of others appropriately

Listen in order to understand rather than to argue

Respect others, whether I agree with them or not; value differences

Take care of myself; say no when I need to take care of self

### LETTING GO MEANS...

- To let go doesn't mean to stop caring; it means I can't fix it for someone else.
- To let go is not to cut myself off; it is the realization that I can't control another.
- To let go is not to enable, but to allow learning to occur from natural consequences.
- To let go is to admit powerlessness, which means that the outcome is not in my hands.
- To let go is not to try to change or blame another; I can only change myself.
- To let go is not to care for, but to care about.
- To let go is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.
- To let go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their own outcomes.
- To let go is not to be protective; it is to permit another to face reality.
- To let go is not to deny, but to accept.
- To let go is not to nag, scold, or argue, but to search out my own shortcomings and to correct them.
- To let go is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish the moment.
- To let go is not to criticize and regulate anyone, but to try to become what I dream I can be.
- To let go is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.
- To let go is to fear less and love more.



These are the instructions on how to let go. Perhaps it is letting go of a rebellious child, or a burden of sorrow, losing a loved one, or learning to live with a heartache. Read this over. Study it, pray over it, and you will find that letting go of your load will release a peace within you, which will allow your spirit to soar...and be free.

### **GRIEF COMPLETION LETTER**

(adapted from Corrigan, 2000)

As you have become self-aware of how others have influenced your beliefs, you become able to see both the positive and negative impacts they have had on you. The way in which people treated you as a child helped formulate your identity and your beliefs about yourself. You may have already become aware that those past situations or persons have limited you in how you were operating in the world. You are most likely developing the skills that you didn't learn as a child or that were distorted in some relationships. The problem is: what to do with the anger, sadness, love and loss associated with that person or that addiction.

The *Grief Completion Letter* will help you complete everything about the relationship that has been unfinished for you until this point. The letter allows you to keep fond memories and all the positive aspects of the relationship. You can also keep your beliefs about Heaven, God, and other spiritual principles. You will now be able to say "good-bye" to what has been unfinished. You will be able to say good-bye to any pain you associated with the relationship, including any unmet hopes, dreams, and expectations. You can also say good-bye to the unrealistic expectation of getting something from someone who could not or would not give it. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT ALTHOUGH GOODBYE SIGNALS THE END OF THIS NEGATIVE CONNECTION, IT IS NOT NECESSARILY THE END OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

Writing a letter is best done alone and in silence. You have proven your courage in looking at your actions, your beliefs and where they came from; continue to use this courage to write the letter of completion. The pain you feel must be confronted directly. It's okay to cry, to feel bad and don't be surprised if you also feel relieved as you write and read your letter. It's not as if you haven't thought about these things before. Many people are aware they have a "unresolved issue" with someone or something; they just don't always know what to do about it.

Find a quiet comfortable position and take several deep breaths. The three major components of the letter will include: making amends, forgiving statements, and significant emotional statements. You will write the letter as if your loved one were alive or present in your life today, and could hear the letter being read. You may wonder what he or she might say in response and how you would respond. The key is to write about what is emotionally incomplete for you. You have now accepted the responsibility for your part in this incompleteness. Write to the person that was, not the person you wish they had been.

- There is no limit on how much you write, but the emotional intensity is often lost in volume.
- This is an opportunity to say the most important unsaid things.
- Generally 1-3 pages is sufficient -- more than five should be a signal to look and see if you're repeating yourself or adding more than what is needed.

## Grief Completion Letter Example

Dear Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed our relationship, and I have discovered some things that I want to tell you.

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I apologize for.....

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I apologize for.....

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I apologize for.....

(These are the things you realize you have done in response to your anger, hurt feelings; resentments that you realize may have hurt the other person. You will probably list more than three apologies. It is helpful to keep them grouped by category.)

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I forgive you for.....

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I forgive you for.....

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I forgive you for.....

(These are the things that you have held on to that have hindered your growth. You will probably list more than three statements. It is helpful to keep them grouped by category).

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I want you to know...(significant emotional statement)

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I want you to know...(significant emotional statement)

Dad/Mom/\_\_\_\_\_, I want you to know...(significant emotional statement)

(These are statements that you have never or rarely said that you felt. They may be as simple as "I appreciate that you made me breakfast", "I thank you for working two jobs to support me and my brothers", or "I thank you for supporting me during my divorce")

Closing your letter:

- Recovery is about completion.
- In order to complete what you have discussed, you must end your letter effectively.
- For the majority of people, the most effective closing is signing:

"I love you, I miss you, Goodbye Dad"

"I have to let you go now, Mom, and I have to let go of the pain"

As you read your letter, you may experience a variety of emotions. You may decide to write letters to other people or situations that you need to let go of also. See if any of the following fits what you have and are learning.

## I've learned...

### I've learned...

That you can do something in an instant that will give you a heartache for life.

That you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.

That you can keep going long after you can't.

That we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

That either you control your attitude or it controls you.

That regardless of how hot and steamy a relationship is at first, the passion fades and there had better be something else to take it's place.

That heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

That money is a lousy way of keeping score.

That my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best time.

That sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down will be the ones to help you get back up.

That sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that still doesn't give me the right to be cruel.

That true friendship continues to grow, even over the longest distance.

And that the same goes for true love.

That just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.

That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them, and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

That your family won't always be there for you. It may seem funny, but people you aren't related to can take care of you and love you and teach you to trust people again. Families aren't always biological.

That no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

That it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.

That no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.

That our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

That just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other. And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.

That we don't have to change friends if we understand that friends change.

That you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret. It could change your life forever.

That two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.

That people who don't even know you can change your life in a matter of hours.

That even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you, you will find the strength to help.

That credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.

That the people you care most about in life are taken from you too soon.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

# SESSION 30

## Roles and Expectations

### SESSION 30

#### Client Handouts

### Roles and Expectations

The most difficult part of any relationship is negotiating. The art of negotiating requires both parties to know their “bottom lines”, what they have to offer in the relationship, what limitations they have, and what rules they bring to the table.

In a healthy negotiation, neither party will promise to do or not do something that is unrealistic. Neither party will allow the other to overstep a boundary that may hurt their relationship. Both parties will be aware of whether or not they can meet the expectation(s) of the other person, or will admit it if they are not sure. All these components are necessary for any type of negotiations, whether it be between friends, business partners, family, or intimate partners.

There are many different influences on roles and expectations in a relationship. Culture, upbringing, acculturation, and old traumatic experiences can affect a person’s “bottom line”, what they feel comfortable offering, what limits they feel they have, and what they expect from the other person. The expectations may be different depending on the relationship -- what you expect from your mother may be different than what you expect from and your best friend or partner.

All relationships have rules. Some of them we are aware of, and some rules we don’t know about until there is a “clash”. The more we know about the rules of any relationship we are in, the better we can handle those relationships. We bring rules from our families of origin, our culture, our neighborhood, and our upbringing into every relationship we have. If the rules we have match the rules of those we are involved with, things will probably go smoothly. If they don’t match, we can expect that the differences will eventually become an issue that can cause problems if not resolved effectively.

There are three kinds of rules in all relationships. The first are the rules we know about which are clearly defined for us. In one way or another, these rules have been stated as an expectation of the other person. These rules are usually similar to the “bottom lines” of the person. The following are a few examples of possible “known” rules in relationships:

- “If you cheat on me, the relationship will be over”
- “If we are to have sex, we will be monogamous”
- “We will be honest with each other”
- “We will have public displays of affection”
- “We will both provide for our children”

The second kind of rule is the one that exists just because “that’s how it is done”. These rules tend to be patterns of behavior that each of us brings from our families of origin. We don’t necessarily know how they came about, but we get a certain comfort from doing them.

These rules cause problems in relationships when each individual brings in “rules” that are totally different from the other. During these clashes it is helpful to have a few effective negotiating skills. The focus when these clashes arise is to develop new family rules for yourselves. It should be a win-win situation, where both parties feel heard, respected and satisfied with the final decision even if it may be different from their original desire.

Some examples of these “rules” are:

- “The entire family goes to my mother’s house for Christmas”
- “We always ate dinner as a family”
- “I wasn’t allowed to wear makeup till I was 15, and our daughter should do the same”
- “My father never changed diapers or washed dishes”
- “Men don’t cry in my family”

The third kind of rule is the most challenging since it is usually a rule in which we are unaware of until it’s broken.

In these situations, the couple needs to address the difference quickly and work to resolve the difference. If it was an unspoken rule, grace and understanding would be helpful from the person who feels slighted by the action/words, since the impact may not have been the intent. It will be challenging to listen to the intent since the residue of how it impacted you will be powerful.

An example of this rule might be: One member of the relationship never challenges anything that is said or done by their parent. Their partner wants to discuss this issue and attempts to bring it up in discussions. This may create a problem in the relationship.

Like other areas of this program, the importance of this section is to help you develop an understanding and awareness of all areas of your relationship. It is acknowledging that you are still in the process of becoming self-aware and your partner is learning about you -- from you. The more you are both aware of the rules, the better equipped you will be to handle problems as they arise.

The poem on the next page is included to show ways that women can express themselves.

## WOMEN

Women have strengths that amaze men  
They carry children, they carry hardships  
They carry burdens, and they hold happiness, love, and joy.  
They smile when they want to scream.  
They sing when they want to cry.  
They cry when they are happy, and they laugh when they are nervous.  
They fight for what they believe in.  
They stand up for injustice.  
They don't take "no" for an answer when they believe there is a better solution.  
They go without new shoes so their children can have them.  
They go to the doctor with a frightened friend.  
They love unconditionally.  
They cry when their children excel and cheer when their friends get awards.  
They are happy when they hear about a birth or a new marriage.  
Their hearts break when a friend dies.  
They have sorrow at the loss of a family member, yet they can be strong when they think there is  
no strength left.  
They know that a hug and a kiss can heal a broken heart.  
Women come in all sizes, in all colors, and in all shapes.  
They'll drive, fly, walk, run, or e-mail you to show how much they care about you.  
The heart of a woman is what makes the world spin!  
Women do more than just give birth, they bring joy and hope.  
They give compassion and ideals.  
They give moral support to their family and friends.  
Women have a lot to say and a lot to give.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

**Answer the following questions about roles:**

In a relationship, I believe that as a woman I am supposed to:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

In a relationship, I believe that a man in a relationship should be able to:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For me, a man cannot:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For me, when I'm in a relationship I cannot:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

A man needs to do more \_\_\_\_\_ than a woman in a relationship.

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

A woman needs to do more \_\_\_\_\_ than a man in a relationship.

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

In the family, a man's role is:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

WEAVER

In a family, a woman's role is:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

In a relationship, my partner believes that as a woman I am supposed to:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

In a relationship, my partner believes that a man in a relationship should be able to:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For my partner, a man cannot:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For my partner, when he is in a relationship he cannot:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For my partner, he believes that a man needs to do more \_\_\_\_\_ than a woman in a relationship.

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

For my partner, he believes a woman needs to do more \_\_\_\_\_ than a man in a relationship.

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_



In the family, my partner believes a man's role is:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

In a family, my partner believes a woman's role is:

Do you think this is negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

The way we make decisions that affect our household:

Is this negotiable? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Recognizing the Differences

Areas where we disagree:

Me	My Partner

WEAVER

How I handle these clashes:

How my partner handles these clashes:

What rules would I like to change about our relationship?

What rules do I think my partner would want to change in our relationship?

**Journal Topics:**

- What other rules clash in our relationship?
- Which rules are negotiable?
- Which rules are important to you and non-negotiable?
- What do you need to do to make these changes happen?
- What is your plan to approach the subject?
- What have you learned about yourself, about your partner, and about your relationship?

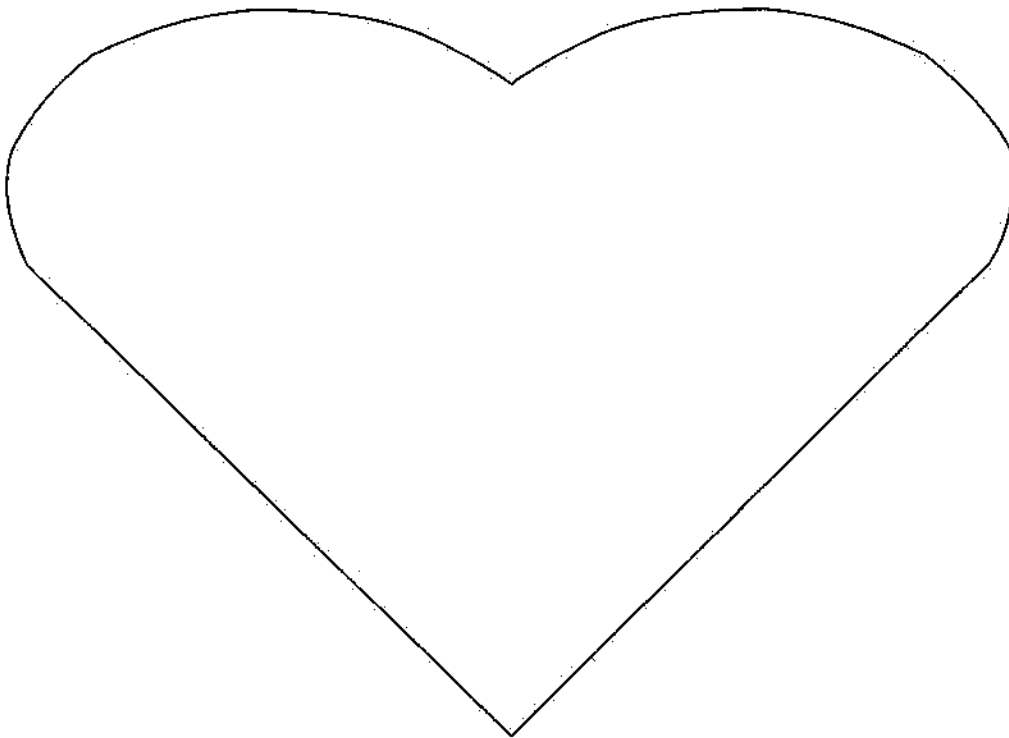
## SESSION 31

# Self-Esteem: Feeling Good About Ourselves

## SESSION 31

### Client Handouts

## SELF-ESTEEM: ME AND HOW I FEEL ABOUT ME



Please fill the heart above with things that give you **INTERNAL** self-esteem, the self-esteem that comes from within you such as values, strengths, beliefs, etc.

Now, take some time to list what you need to do to maintain that self-esteem. Examples of this might be: Being true to my values, being honest about my feelings and so on.

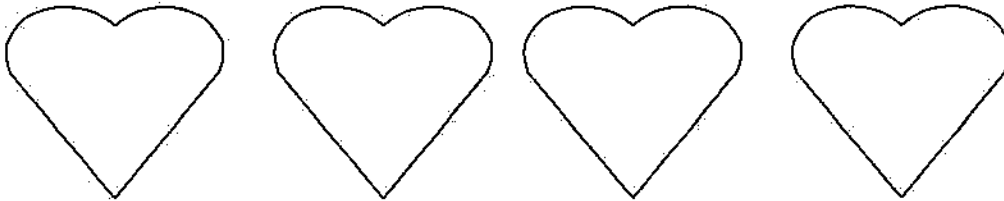
### My Self-Esteem...

Fill in the hearts below with the things you need to get from others in order to maintain this level of self-esteem.



What are the things you need to work on in order to have stronger self-esteem?

Where/how are you going to do this? Fill in the hearts below.



How has being in this group helped your self-esteem?

**REMEMBER, THE MORE YOU LIVE BY WHO YOU REALLY ARE, THE STRONGER YOUR SELF-ESTEEM WILL BE!!!**

Now that you have some idea about how to build and maintain your self-esteem, take some time to consider the things you need to do to take good care of yourself. Use the following questions as a guideline.

What is a good relationship for me? What do I need to get and what do I need to give?

What things do I need to avoid -- places, people, situations etc.?

Things I do right now to take care of myself:

WEAVER

Things I do that are not beneficial to myself:

Supports I need to help me take good care of myself:

Write out your own self-care plan for the next three months.

In the space below, write a letter of encouragement to yourself that you can use when things are getting tough. Tell yourself the things that you need to do in order to get through tough times, the resources you need, and how to get them.

1

2

3

# SESSION 32

## The Final Touches

### SESSION 32

#### Client Handouts

### The Final Touches

The most challenging aspect of changing your destiny will be regularly monitoring your thoughts about events. This will require mental energy until it becomes a new habit that you can do without thinking. Remember that your thoughts become your “belief system” and this influences how you view the world. The following is a summary of the *Cabarcas Destiny Model* from Session 13:

- A: **Event** which leads to...
- B: **Thoughts/Beliefs** which leads to...
- C: **Feelings/Emotions** which leads to...
- D: **Words/Reactions** which leads to...
- E: **Consequences** (positive and negative)

Throughout this program you have been learning new ways of interpreting and thinking about events. The next challenge will be to envision yourself as a complete person and then work towards that image. In essence, you will be **weaving** new ideas, new beliefs, and new feelings about yourself and the world into your mind. **Weaving** is symbolic of the process that you have undertaken. It requires new skills and tools that you have learned in this program, but also requires your commitment to yourself to continue to weave new pictures and new positive episodes into your life and the lives of those around you.

Take inventory of your life -- the regrets you have, the blessings you have received, the joyous moments you've had, the heartaches you've survived, and how they have shaped you into the person you are.

Are you happy with the person that you've become? Are you willing to continue to make the changes in yourself to become the person you envision yourself as? Answer the following to evaluate any unnoticed areas that could hinder your improvement.

### Life Inventory Exercise

I have tried to live my life by these principles, to the best of my ability:

My favorite saying, quote, poem, scripture, or song is...

My greatest accomplishment(s) are (have been)...

I am most proud of...

My happiest/sweetest memory is...

I have been most inspired by...

I have found myself most at peace when...

My biggest regret is...

My greatest heartache(s) is/are...

If I could do things over again, I would change...



WEAVER.

I am most grateful for...

Imagine that you have been told you have one week to live.

One thing I want to do before I die...

The people I want to say goodbye to are (for each person write exactly what you would want to say to him or her; use another sheet of paper if necessary):

What are some things about yourself that you realize have limited your ability to fully enjoy your life until now?

## My Legacy

As you look at how you have treated those persons that you know, what would they say about you?

My Mother:

My Father:

My Partner:

My Brother/Sister:

My Children:

My Past Boyfriends:

My Friends:

My Neighbors:

My Spiritual Family:

My Boss:

Add any one else not mentioned here who is important in your life:

## Journal Topic:

As you began thinking about your life, did you become aware of some “unresolved business” you would like to take care of before you die?

Which are the things that you plan to take care of so that you have as few regrets as possible?

What are some statements you would like to say to people so that they know how much they have meant to you?

What are some behaviors that you plan on changing after completing this exercise?

## Developing Your New Identity

### Practice presenting yourself in a new way.

- Think before you speak
- Think about the tone you are saying it in
- Think about how you are wording it

### Practice stating your needs.

I want.....

I desire.....

I wish.....

I would like.....

I feel...when you...

### Become talk-oriented but also practice the art of silence.

Take time to “listen” to yourself as well as others.

- Build strong support systems
- Look at the circle of friends you have. Do you need to cultivate new ones?
- Is your family supportive? Do you need to create an “alternate family”? (For example: a church family, an A.A. family, or another kind of support system)
- Be a positive risk taker
- After evaluating the reasons you want to take the risk, start small.
- Ask yourself: “The worst that can happen is...Can I live with that?”

Women tend to internalize failure and credit success to luck.

Practice taking a bow verbally and saying, “Thank you, I DID do a good job.”

Pat yourself on the back.

Give yourself a treat...like a manicure, a new outfit, or a weekend away.

1

2

3

# **SESSION 33**

## **Role Reversal and Empathy**

### **SESSION 33**

#### **Client Handout**

### **Role Reversal**

In this exercise, every group member is going to take on the role of her partner. You will leave the room and come back as your partner. You are then to tell of the incident that led to your coming into the program, **FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR PARTNER!!!**

Please tell the details of the event, as if you were your partner. Make an attempt to get into the feelings, the tone of voice, and the kinds of words used by your partner. If there are any behaviors that your partner does, please use them as best as you can. Remember, this exercise may bring up a great deal of emotion. That's OK because the emotion is important for you to feel.

Group members will ask questions of the "partner". Please address the partner by her/his name. Ask questions with respect and caring. It is OK to use/or ask about information that you have learned about the member and her partner. This is not a time to joke around or to make fun. As a group member, you may ask for more information about feelings, about what led up to the incident, about the relationship in general, about others who might have been there, or about how the victim was dealing with the situation. If there is any disrespect, that person will be excused from the session.

The point of this exercise is to learn more about yourself, the incident, what led up to the incident, what things need to be changed, and how it impacted you and those around you.

#### **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? How could that benefit your relationship?
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 or siblings) Do you see any of these behaviors in your child? How can you help your child overcome those fears?

#### **HOMEWORK**

Write a letter of apology 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 or your family, and how you will take measures to ensure that this will never happen again.

# **SESSION 34**

## **Relapse Prevention**

### **SESSION 34**

#### **Client Handouts**

### **Domestic Violence Relapse Prevention Plan**

The purpose of this session is to help you develop an awareness of potential violent/abusive behavior(s) and a plan to avoid abuse/violence. The more you know about your potential triggers and "hot spots" the more you will be able to develop and maintain control of your behavior. With that in mind, answer the following questions as you prepare your relapse prevention plan.

What is the worst thing you have ever done to an intimate partner? Please describe what happened, the situation leading up to the event, and the feelings you remember experiencing.

At what point did you become abusive? What did the abusiveness feel like to you? What did you want to happen in this situation?

Was there any spillover of this abusiveness into other relationships, such as friends, children, or other family members? If so, who, how, and what?

What made the abuse/violence stop? Was it you or someone/something else?

## REFERENCES

Do you know what your breaking point is? Describe it as much as possible, in emotional terms, behavioral terms, and in physical terms. List three situations that have occurred where you have thought you were "out of control." Where was the breaking point?

What was the outcome of your actions when you were abusive/violent? List both the positive and the negative outcomes to you and to others.

Was it worth it? Why or why not?

If you were now in the same situation as you described above, what would you do to not be abusive/violent and to work towards a constructive, non-violent resolution?

What would you be doing, thinking, and feeling?

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

Please list your support system and how you will utilize it to no longer be abusive/violent in your relationships.

*Read the following coping strategies and list things you can do for yourself in each category.*

**Relaxation techniques:** What can you do immediately to relax yourself and relieve some of the tension that is building up?

**Scare yourself/support yourself:** Remember the aftermath of a similar event and what the costs have been to you.

**Remember a time when you have been able to stop yourself from acting out,** and what the positive consequences have been.

Now compare the two and ask yourself which scenario you would rather have happen. Both can work; you need to choose the one that will have the most immediate impact on you.

**Self-talk:** Talk to yourself as a friend who wants to help; what would you say?



## REFERENCES

**Strengths and support:** What strengths do you have which will help you get through this time? What support do you need?

With the above information in mind, please describe your plan for being non-abusive/non-violent. What will you use to give yourself information that your anger is approaching dangerous levels or leading towards the specific behavior that you are working to control/change? Describe things you will say to yourself to calm down, techniques for getting and using support, the supports you will use, and how you will reward yourself for the positive behavior.

The second step is to develop a self-maintenance plan for the future. How are you going to maintain the positive changes you have made while in this program? What do you need to do on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis in order to keep these changes positive? What do you need to do in your relationships with others to maintain the positive changes?

Some suggestions are:

- ❖ Keep a journal.
- ❖ Set time aside on a weekly basis to discuss concerns with your partner.
- ❖ Take time for yourself on a regular basis.
- ❖ Develop a positive support system.
- ❖ Take self-help classes.

**What's your plan?**

For the last part, write a letter to yourself. Tell yourself how far you have come, reminding yourself where you have come from and the changes you have made in how you handle things. Give yourself a plan for taking care of yourself during difficult times and situations.



## AFTER A WHILE...

After a while

You learn the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul.  
And you learn that love doesn't always mean leaving  
and company doesn't always mean security.

And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts  
and presents aren't promises.

And you begin to accept your defeats with your head up and your eyes ahead with  
the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.

And you learn to build all your roads on today  
because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans.  
And futures have a way of falling in mid-flight.

After a while

You learn that even sunshine burns if you get too much.

So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul  
instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

And you learn that you really can endure, that you really are strong,  
and you really do have worth.

And you learn...

And you learn...

And with every good-bye, you learn.

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