

Domestic Violence Communication 35 Review

Revitalize Your Relationship

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The next eight to ten classes will be offering tools to repair and revitalize your relationship. If you are not still in the relationship where trouble evolved, please use this to help you establish a good foundation for a new relationship.

This is most definitely a review of some of the tools you learned in the first few classes in this program. I am adding them, again, here because communication is so very important in every verbal interaction. Please review and catch anything you may have missed in the previous class.

Communication is the most important aspect of any relationship. Changing a behavior is not easy. We have communicated in a certain way since birth. Changing that method of behavior may take concentration and time. The change could mean we become more effective in letting others know our needs and feelings.

Adopting a new way of communication can be tedious. If you went to the dentist and the dentist told you that the way you have brushed your teeth for years and years was all wrong. You are told “don’t brush up and down.....brush down down down on the top and up up up on the bottom.” Changing that method will mean you need to slow down and concentrate. At first the new behavior seems strange and difficult. After you practice for a while the new method becomes more and more familiar and soon it is as automatic as the old way.

It will be the same with changing your way of communication. You will need to slow down and pay attention.

Sometimes we learn behaviors in childhood, especially if we have had a difficult childhood, which help us to survive the childhood. We can acknowledge for ourselves the behaviors worked for us in childhood but are now getting in the way of relationship success.

If we learn to communicate in an effective way any issue can be resolved. This does not mean the resolution will be positive. It may mean when we

resolve our issue it is revealed we are not happy with the relationship and need to move on.

If the communication is effective the chance of working through issues and making the relationship work is much higher. Sometimes couples come to see me and they have been having routine disagreements and arguments. Once they slow down and listen they begin to realize they are on the same page. They learn the concept of “different” not right and wrong.

If one of you has to be “right” and one “wrong” you are setting yourself up for failure. Think about agreeing to disagree. Think about allowing the other person a difference. Think about slowing down and really listening to your partner’s words and feelings. The formula for communication in this chapter will help you with that new behavior.

Communication is the key to letting others know how we feel and what our needs are.

We communicate in many ways. Our body language and our walk can communicate who we are, how we are feeling, and our health. Our eyes communicate feelings and opinions, our sighs or groans communicate. The way we touch or do not touch tells others about us. Our words are not the only communication tools we use.

This program will deal with learning to use our words to communicate in a way others can hear and in a way we will also FEEL heard. In an assertive way that gets our needs and wishes heard and perhaps met in a healthy way that will enhance your relationship and bring you closer together.

Remember, you may agree to disagree...there is NO wrong....JUST RIGHT and RIGHT. You can experience the same event and have a totally different memory of the event. NOT right and wrong but DIFFERENT.

Communication can be aggressive, passive, assertive or passive aggressive.

Here is an example of the different communication patterns. You are sitting at dinner and want the salt-

Aggressive Communication example: Aggressive communication style will mean you are trying to get your needs met through force-verbal, emotional, or physical. Here is what your statement will sound like....bossy and loud; **“CAN’T ANY OF YOU STUPID PEOPLE PASS THE SALT!!!”**

Aggressive styles of communication can feel violent. Yelling and swearing and calling names is a form of violence.

Passive Communication example: When you communicate in a passive manner there may not be a statement. Or you may hint at what you need. You sit quietly wishing someone would pass the salt.

Assertive Communication example: When you communicate assertively you increase the chance of getting your needs met without hurting anyone else or using force. This is what an assertive statement would sound like; “Would someone please pass me the salt?”

An example of Passive Aggressive style; your boss asks you to file some things and filing is not your job. You are irritated and file them all wrong.... Passive is unhealthy communication in that it is VICTIM thinking and not being proactive about our own need.

Some people have the talent of mind reading, but most of us are not able to read another’s mind. SO...even though someone loves you soooooooooooooooooo much they probably can NOT read your mind. Passive style of communication relies on the wish our mind can be read and our needs magically be taken care of.

It is your responsibility to ask for your own needs. This is assertive communication and is also the healthy form of communication. Assertive communication gets us what we need or want without hurting anyone.

LIFE FILTERS

We listen and talk through our “life filters”. Life filters are ways we learn to speak, listen, express anger, and other communication methods.

Here is a little story to help you understand “life filters”.

John grew up in Sweden. When he graduated from college he moved to NY to work. He was there about six months before he became really really home sick.

One morning he was riding the subway to work when a blond woman got on the same car. He was struck with the beauty of her blondness and it increased his being home sick....Oh he did miss Sweden and all the Swedish blondness.

As they stepped off the car they were next to each other and John turned to Kate and said, "You have beautiful hair." Now Kate grew up in the Bronx and when someone mentioned her hair it was to indicate they thought she was an "air head blond person."

Kate could have given John a wicked eye and stomped off to work telling her co-workers about the "jerk" on the subway. John would then have really wanted to go home and talked to his co-workers about the rude woman he had complemented on the way to work. BUT....this is MY story....so here is how it goes.

Kate turns to John and says (this is reflective listening-a clue for you later) "What you think I am an airhead?" John was a little shocked and said "NO, I think your hair is beautiful and it makes me lonely for my home, Sweden."

Well Kate and John had lunch...and got married and lived happily ever after.....YEA!!

There is so much between lunch and happily ever after. It would be like a story that goes like this. Once upon a time there was a man with a pile of sticks. He built a house. It was a good house.

LOTZ of work between the pile of sticks and the house....just like there is a lot of work and paying attention between the lunch and happily ever after.

Relationship take time and energy and feeding and nurturing. They are a living breathing entity. You can have wonderful, just okay, cold nothingness, or abusive. You choose.

This program gives you tools to build a strong healthy growing relationship and teaches you to enhance that relationship.

If you put the tools in the toolbox and leave them there NOTHING changes. It is totally up to you. ONE word of reality check is...."relationships take TWO." Two people working toward the same goal.

LET'S START THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP

The next section will give you a format for basic communication.

This format is soooo simple and yet SO hard. A simple formula to express yourself. BUT you have been expressing yourself YOUR way since you were born. Learning a new way to communicate is like learning a new dance, or

how to brush your teeth a totally different way. It takes attention, practice, and hanging in there until you have it and it becomes automatic. Like dancing, or riding a bike, or learning a new computer program.

The format will help you to talk to someone else without your finger wagging at him or her. It will help you identify your own feelings when certain events happen. It will help you identify your own needs and wishes. SO, it is more for YOU than for THEM.

The second part of the format will teach “reflective listening”. This will slow you down so you are actually listening to the speaker instead of thinking of what YOU will say next. It will then tell the speaker if you have heard the statement the way it was intended to be heard.

Example;

You say-“Could you help me with the yard this weekend?”

Your significant other hears- “You never do anything!”

So reflective listening means the SO (significant other) will say, “What I hear you say is I am Lazy.” And you will clarify “No I just wanted to be sure we were both available for yard work this weekend.”

Our life filters help or hinder our communication, both speaking and hearing. As with John and Kate we may hear something totally different than the speaker intended. The speaker is NOT WRONG and the listener is NOT WRONG....NO WRONG...notice??

The next page contains the Communication Guide. You may want to copy this and use it to write on. Keep a clean one to make other copies. Make at least two copies so each of you can have one.

This tool is an excellent tool to talk to anyone....your kids, your boss, your mother, your father, sister, .well you get the idea.

Communication guide

First person-person “A”;

When _____ (this happens)

I Feel _____ (emotional feeling) See attached “feelings cheat sheet”

Because _____

And I want _____

(Keep it short and to the point. This identifies for you what feeling comes up when something happens, why they come up and your own needs.)

Second person-“Person” B”;

What I hear you say is _____

(This is “reflective listening” you state back the jest of what you heard or the emotion you heard. Keep it short). Then if that is not what A meant for you to hear, person A will say NO and repeat the statement trying to change it in a way that person A’s meaning can be heard better.

We talk and listen through our life filters. What one person says and intends to be heard may be totally different than the receiver hears. SO the reflective listening confirms if the message was heard in the way the speaker intended.

HOMEWORK...DON’T YOU JUST LOVE IT?

You get to do HOMEWORK even though you are getting this at home....psyber space and homework too.

For at least ten minutes each day – practice the Communication tool on the previous page. Each person takes turns being A and being B. Keep the HOOKS out of your statements. Example; “You are wearing the dress I gave you..... (hook) finally.”

Keep the statements about YOU and your feelings...not about the other person's shortcomings. Keep this clear in all the sections of this exercise.

The "I feel" part needs to be an emotion...not a physical feeling or a "think" use your cheat sheet and take your time. Some people are not in touch with their emotions. Feelings just ARE they are not right and wrong. They are NOT good or bad. Oh yes they feel good or bad. Feelings are always there. They are sometime quiet and calm and not real obvious. Sometimes they are like a hurricane. But, you are always feeling SOMETHING. If you have trouble getting in touch with your feelings, practice all through the day-ask yourself every few minutes or on the hour "what am I feeling now!"

Because will help to identify for us and our listener why we are feeling this way. Again, keep it short.

AND I WANT....well tell what you really want instead of the event...or more of the event.

This is how it will sound when done correctly;

When -you come home and start yelling I feel- angry because -I am tired too and we are in this together And I want- to know what you need to make your mood different, because I want a peaceful evening too

This how it will sound when done "wrong";

When -you come home and start your nasty yelling I feel-like throwing up my hands in disgust because -you are always (always and never are a clue this is out of control and not on track) yelling and never take my into consideration And I want -you to stop your loud mouth

Do you see the difference? The first is about you and your feeling and what you want. The second is an attack on your SO (significant other.)

Remember-YOU get what YOU NOTICE!! That is true in any relationship. If you continue to notice only the negative you will get more of that. If you acknowledge the positive and the behaviors you want to see more, you will get an increase in those behaviors.

Practice makes perfect you will NOT use this new communication formula when you get upset if you have not practiced and are comfortable with the rhythm and how the words go together and are in touch with your feelings. You will not go into the appropriate format if you have not practiced

enough to make the new behavior feel automatic. Old habits of survival, or old ways that are more familiar and easy will take over and your progress will suffer. SO, give yourself the gift of change and growth. Give yourself the gift

gift of new beginnings. Give yourself the gift of happiness. Practice expressing in a way others can hear what you need them to hear. Practice expressing in a way that helps you identify what is happening for you. This new way of expressing will work for you in all of your relationships, parenting, employment, friendship, significant other relationships, even with casual contacts.

Remember, you learned to communicate in your family of origin where you grew up. You learn to express anger, ignore or talk about it, scream or pout....etc.

ANGER

Just a note here about Anger. ANGER is “just” an emotion. It feels bad, but it is NOT bad. What we DO with our anger is what either works for us or gets us in trouble. We can communicate our anger in a positive healthy way and be assertive AND angry. We can be ANGRY with someone and still LOVE him or her. One of the later sections will deal with anger and “anger management.”

This is the end of Chapter one on Communication in the Relationship Healing and Enhancement Program. Congratulations for your courage to change yourself and your learned behaviors. My best to you. Remember practice makes perfect, anything worth having is worth working for, old habits die hard.....yes some of those old sayings are actually right on.

Good luck and thank you.

Suggested Reading

Unfinished Business by Maggie Scarf

Intimate Partners: Patterns of Love and Marriage by Maggie Scarf

How to Listen so your Kids will Talk and How to Talk so your Kids will Listen by Adel Faber and Elaine Mazlish

101 Romantic Nights of Great Romance: Secret Sealed Seductions for Fun-Loving Couples by Laura Corn

Tantra Secrets for Men by Kerry Riley with Diane Riley

Nonviolent Communication-A Language of Life by Marshall B. Rosenberg PhD

Tantra – The Art of Conscious Loving by Charles and Caroline Muir

Hot Monogamy – Essential Steps to More Passionate, Intimate, Lovemaking by Patricia Love, MD and Jo Robinson

Co-dependent No More by Melodie Beattie

Suggested Websites;

Go to “links” on www.yvonesinclair.com

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