



## **AN INVITATION TO BE REAL**

Coming to the communication with a bag full of expectations, demands and ready-made solutions isn't going to allow any room for creative sharing of Feelings, thoughts and ideas. All I will be communicating is my fear-driven need to control.

At times we will need something changed in the relationship which may require our partner to see the situation differently. When our partner doesn't understand immediately, we may get angry and frustrated and accuse our partner of being stupid or uncaring. When this is the case, we are in fact holding our partner as an emotional hostage until they change their mind! We are holding our partner responsible for our own fears and insecurities.

In the space of a few minutes we expect the other person to fully understand what we are talking about. We expect the other person to drop their years of prior conditioning and expectations about that particular situation, and then suddenly have a whole new mindset. This is unrealistic. We, on the other hand, may have been brooding about the situation for days, weeks or even months!

This expectation that our partner be in the same headspace as us when we approach them is a very common problem in relationship and all communication situations. It is about learning effective and caring communication skills.

Therefore an appropriate approach could be:

**“I need to talk to you about what happened last night. Is now a good time, or is there a better time for you?”**

To prepare for the communication, we first need to take responsibility for our own reactions and expectations. We then need to spend some time processing them so we can enter into the communication consciously. An authentic way of communicating is to begin with a description of where we are in our process of sorting out our thoughts and feelings around a particular issue.

For example:

**“When you said those things to me I found myself reacting to it. I found I was left sad and angry, but I am not sure why. Since thinking about it and trying to get in touch with my feelings, I have gained a little bit of insight, which I would like to share with you. I would also like to know what you were feeling at the time, because I am still a little confused.”**

It is hard, of course, to be this eloquent in the moment, so it is helpful to write it down first and have that with you when you say it. You can even read what you have written if you need to in order to get yourself past your old programming.

This genuine description of where you are in the moment leaves the space open for further communication. You have done your best to not revert to blaming. Rather, you have chosen to parent your emotions by connecting to and caring for your vulnerable human self. Some of this negative energy is still bound to remain and you may still feel victimized at one level or another, but you are willing to give your partner the benefit of the doubt. You are willing to consider that there is generally more to an issue than is reflected in your emotional reactions. Your willingness to approach your partner in this way demonstrates how you would like your partner to come to you when you unwittingly say something insensitive, or accidentally push that big red button labeled “rejection complex”, for example. A complex is another name given to an unconscious thought-pattern or program that distorts the mind’s ability to perceive accurately, something we hope to expose and heal through this process of developing conscious-awareness.

Another example could be:

**“I have been thinking about an issue I have had in our relationship for some time. I would like to sit down with you and tell you about it. I need some things to change in our relationship but I want to give you a chance to understand my needs and then have a think about it.”**

Here you are letting your partner know that you have an issue, that you want to make a time to talk about it and also that you are prepared to give your partner time to think about it.

Sometimes issues are too big or complex to sort out in one go. Being willing to work through the issue in stages, over a period of time, is very important. It is acknowledging that both parties have the right to spend time processing the issue. It is also important for you to consider that your partner may have some important input on the matter that you may not have considered. When approached in this way, you are more likely to feel respected and in control of your own process. Both yourself and your partner will have a better chance of discussing the issue in a relaxed and loving manner.

Our fear-driven egos, which want it all to be black and white and resolved straight away, tend to fall into blaming, demanding and accusing. While we are still human beings, wherever we go, so does our fear-based ego. Therefore, we are always going to be struggling within our own self to find appropriate and effective ways to communicate in the moment. Within any healthy relationship, this is understood and accepted. Perfection is not expected. Some initial confusion, negative emotion and miscommunication is seen as an inevitable consequence of being human.

When a time to communicate about an important issue is mutually arranged, all concerned are more likely to approach the communication in a constructive way. We each have time to consciously prepare and take care of our respective vulnerabilities. We will each feel more in control and empowered. Using the open and patient approach described here will better ensure that potential conflict is appropriately managed and damaging consequences avoided.

### **An Invitation to be Real Summary**

- ♥ Communication around a sensitive issue needs to be invited, not demanded.
- ♥ Mutually agreeing on a time to communicate around a sensitive issue helps each person feel more in control and empowered.
- ♥ Allowing your partner time to process his or her thoughts and feelings around the issue is important for creating harmony in the communication.
- ♥ Your partner may have something important to offer the discussion that you may not have considered.
- ♥ Processing an issue often needs to be taken in stages.

- ♥ Taking responsibility to process your reactions and expectations around a sensitive issue before you talk things over helps you to approach the communication consciously.
- ♥ Freely admitting your vulnerability right from the start helps to set the tone for open and honest communication.
- ♥ You need to be mindful to communicate with your partner in a way that you would like your partner to communicate with you.

\*

## **Changing the Old Program**

### **Inviting Communication**

1. Spend some time contemplating how you could incorporate these skills into your relationship communication, for example:
  - using an invitation to talk
  - being honest about your vulnerability
  - allowing the other person time to process the issue.
2. Practise communicating in this way by writing down examples and trying them out with friends as well as with your partner, if your partner is open to it.
3. You can also try communicating in the old non-constructive ways just to experience the difference. Let yourselves have fun with it.
4. Explore different ways to communicate using these skills and let your feelings guide you with regard to what works.