



Relationship Matters

Controlling Your Reactivity

A Thoughtful Question #2

When is it “Right” to Share Your Emotions?

Ask Yourself:

“What is the *Purpose* of Sharing What You are Feeling and Experiencing with Your Spouse (or Someone Else)?”

“What Do You Want to *Happen* as a Result?”

“Can the Other Person Find the Value in this Process?”

“Does the Other Person Have the Tolerance/Ability to Participate in this Process?”

Responsible Sharing

Take Responsibility for Your Own Emotions.

Resist the Temptation to “Blame” Others for What You are Feeling. Be Careful of the “You” word!

Share from Inside Your Hula-Hoop So as to be Known.

Your Emotions Will Tell A Lot About Your Own Life.

Share Your Life with Others without Taking Them Emotionally Hostage!

The ABC's of Emotion

In order for a problem to be *the* problem, don't *you* become the problem.

In order for an issue to have a chance to become the issue, don't let your emotional response to the issue become the issue.

What's the real issue: Your emotional response to the issue? Or the issue?

What do *you want* the focus to be?

Are you trying to find a solution? Or do you simply *want* to make it “personal?”

The ABC's of Emotions

There is the “problem” and then again, there is our *response* to the problem.

We are each responsible for our response to the problem.

Our emotional response does not necessarily change “reality.” *If our emotional response does bring about change, we may have to continually have the emotional response in order to sustain the change that has been created.*

The ABC's of Emotion

Resist the temptation to say: “This shouldn't be happening!”

Rather, say this: “Everything is exactly as it should be in this moment for things to be as they are, whether I like it or not. What is necessary for it to be this way is present.”

If all the ingredients are still present, you will get the same results.

Anger: The Emotion

An Emotion Based upon the Narrative/Perspective of:
Truth, Justice, Right, Wrong, What Should Be, What
Ought Be.

An Emotion Experienced as the Result of a “Blocked
Goal”

An Emotion Ignited as a Result of Felt Powerlessness,
Shame, Humiliation - Leading to Rage

An Emotion that Represents Inhibited Grieving, Sadness
and Loss

Controlling Your Reactivity

Mastering the Discipline of Self-Control

The Concept

Effective interpersonal relations are enormously benefited by both a stable sense of self and a capacity for spontaneity in emotional expression.

Successful relationships require a capacity to self-regulate emotions in appropriate ways, to control impulsive behavior and to tolerate stimuli that produces discomfort, to a certain degree.

An Unregulated Living Organism is, by nature, Invasive.

The Concept

Successful, Productive Relationships Require Four Emotion Modulation Abilities:

1. Inhibit Inappropriate Behavior Related to Strong Emotions
2. Self-Regulate Physiological Arousal Associated with Emotional Affect
3. Refocus Attention in the Presence of Strong Affect
4. Organize Self in Service of an External, Non-Mood Dependent Goal

Emotional Vulnerability

- **High Sensitivity to Emotional Stimuli**

Reacts Quickly; Low Threshold

- **Inability to Regulate Emotional Intensity**

Emotional Reactions are Extreme

- **Slow Return to Emotional Baseline**

Emotional Reactions are Long-Lasting

A Full-System Response

Emotions are “Full-System” Responses. A Current Emotion Integrates the Entire System in its Favor.

Once Started, Emotions tend to Repeatedly Re-Fire.

A Slow Return to Baseline Exacerbates this Reactivating Effect.

This then Contributes to Increased High Sensitivity to the next Emotional Stimulus.

Make a Healthy Shift

Increase Self-Awareness and Humility

“What can I learn from this?”

“What is it about me that contributed to me being triggered?”

“What is it in me that forms a hotspot about that topic?”

“What is it in me as a “host” that allowed this pathogen (virus) to become “active?”

Make a Healthy Shift

Increase Self-Observation

“What thoughts and emotions am I experiencing?”

“How are these thoughts and emotions affecting how I conduct myself?”

“What are my own emotional hot-buttons?” Identify These

Learn to Anticipate Your Hot-Buttons. Make a List of Responses that you Can Do. Rehearse Your Self-Talk.

Make a Healthy Shift

Increase Whole-Body Sensing

When we become triggered, the reaction most likely shows up first in our bodies. Physical sensations carry important information.

Pay attention to your facial muscles.

Pay attention to your flushed feelings.

Practice Mindfulness – Living in the Moment

Make a Healthy Shift

Increase reflective Processing

“Is this the only way to look at this situation?”

“What does this belief or emotion accomplish in my life?
What purpose might it serve?”

Make a Healthy Shift

If You Cannot Regulate Your Emotions, Make an Effort to Control Your Behaviors.

Make an Effort to Control your Negative Mental Tapes which arise out of Anxiety.

Self-Soothing may Require a Temporary Time-Out from the Relationship. Being “Out of Sync” is not a “Bad” Thing, unless You Make it a “Bad” Thing.

Practice “Mindfulness”

Emotional Reactivity in Significant Relationships

A Pressure-Cooker Designed to Increase our Personal Growth!

Short-Term Relationships

Image/Presentation of Self

Other-Validation/Affirmation/Reciprocity

Reflected Sense of Self

Borrowed Functioning

Anxiety Reduction

Bonding/Fusion/Completion

A Shift Must Occur

The supply of good feelings to the ego is interrupted.

Negativity , discomfort, and distress begin to occur.

Each view the other as the “solution” to their problem.

Each attempts to persuade the other to “listen,” so as to “understand,” in order to “change” so that he/she can be “happy.”

A Negative Reciprocity Cycle Begins

A power struggle for Dominance, Control and Influence increases.

“Honey, if you would just do it *my* way, *we* would be happy; everything would be fine! It’s *your* stubbornness that is preventing *our* happiness.”

High Predictable Divorce

Attempts by Each to Influence the Other as the Solution
Fail

Increased Harsh, Non-Edited “Start-Up”

Each Look to the Other for Cooperation in Repair
Attempts

Increased Negativity. Increased Negative Attribution.
Increased Negative Emotions

Forms a Tight, Closed-System Feed-Back Loop!

High Predictable Divorce

Criticism: Complaints Fail. Character Attacks Increase.
Negative Links Connect in a Chain

Contempt: Increased Negativity, Character Attacks,
Hostility

Defensiveness: Both View Themselves as “Righteous
Victims” Cross Complaining, Blame-Shifting, Making
Excuses

StoneWalling

Make a Healthy Shift

One Must Give-Up Seeking to Control, Influence and Correct the Other.

One Must Give-Up on Seeking to Gain the Other Person's Acceptance, Understanding and Validation.

One Must Give-Up Seeking Solutions Outside of Their own Hula-Hoop.

One Must Seek to Confront and Control Self rather than Confront and Control their Spouse.

Make a Healthy Shift

One Must Embrace the Journey of Modulating their own Anxiety and not Absorbing the Other Person's Anxiety.

The More Each Person is able to Regulate their own Anxiety, the more Stable the Relationship can Become; the Less need they each will have to Control Each Other.

Make a Shift: Refuse to take your Partner's Behaviors (or lack of) Personally.

Give Your Growth Challenge Meaning and Purpose.