

## *Calming Yourself*

Many times, we are the only one who can make us feel better, again. For a couple relationship to be happy and stable, over time, though, EACH person must be willing to look at themselves. Here are some ideas to help you do that.

1. Learn about your own patterns of becoming overwhelmed and remove yourself from situations where that is occurring. Calm yourself and then resume your conversations. Talking when flooded with feelings is usually useless, and often harmful.
2. The easiest, cheapest way to calm down, which is always available, is to breathe. Breathe deeply pushing air into your stomach without straining your chest and then slowly, slowly blow the air out. Do this two or three times, at least.
3. Put your partner in perspective. Your partner is a tender, wounded person as you are and sees things from her/his own point of view. S/he has a right to his or her feelings and thoughts. You do not need to see everything from that point of view. Free yourself from that viewpoint and review how you see yourself.
4. Ask yourself what you have control over in the situation and what is your business? Take care of your business and learn to detach yourself from what you cannot change. Often, you will find you are trying to change your partner. He or she is really not someone you have much control over. Look to your own business.
5. See if you are in a two choice dilemma--that is, you want two things that are mutually exclusive, e.g. you want your partner to do what you want and to feel perfectly free.
6. Continue to remember good things, generous, helpful, and positive experiences you have had together.

7. Take a walk or do an activity you enjoy. Try to experience the joy of it for yourself. See if you can forget about your partner and the hurt for a bit. This becomes a chance to see the experience differently.
8. When you have taken a break from the problem, go back and see if you can hear anything about what your partner was feeling that could be a result of the manner in which you expressed yourself.
9. While not using your partner's negative view of you as the truth, see how you feel about what you did--are you completely satisfied with your part of the exchange? Ask if this was the best you? Were you feeling panic? blaming? or using bad timing? Your intentions were probably good but you may have expressed yourself in a way your partner saw as hurtful. Remember we judge ourselves by our intentions; we judge our partners by their behavior.
10. Try to hold two different points of view at once: your partner's view of the situation and your own. They are each valid. See if your tender parts got in the way of being close to each other. These are the fears and defenses we all have and need to learn about so they do not run us. They take time to learn about and more time to change.
11. Give yourself compassionate understanding and then see if you can also see your partner more compassionately.
12. Remember, as long as you stay angry at your partner, you avoid looking at yourself.
13. Think about how your partner's style and yours is different, and how misunderstandings result because of those differences.

Such an important capacity to develop. Call for assistance.

To discuss your answers further, please call.