

The Intentional Dialogue

from Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., *Getting the Love You Want*.

The Intentional Dialogue, a dialogue or conversation with the intention, with the expectation, that you will listen to the other person long enough and fully enough until you are able to hear and understand their point of view, with compassion. Some times, when you understand each other, that is sufficient to deal with the issues. Some times, you must go further and ask for a change in behavior to handle the situation.

Make an appointment.

MIRRORING, Reflecting exactly what you heard. No interpretation or different language. "If I heard you correctly...." "Is that right?" "Is there more about that?"

VALIDATION, "You make sense, because...." You do not have to agree to validate what your partner said.

EMPATHY, "I imagine you might be feeling...." Use single feeling words, sad, hurt, anxious, misunderstood, etc. Check, "Is that right?"

Behavior Change Request

Say your frustration briefly, "I feel frustrated when..." or, "that hurts me..." and "makes me afraid that..." Partner mirrors.

Say your childhood wound or issue which is related to the frustration, if you know. Partner summarizes, validates and expresses empathy. Then say, "What do you want or need?"

Say your global desire, the biggest, largest wish you have to resolve this particular issue. Partner mirrors, validates and expresses empathy. Then says, "What specifically can I do that would help you?"

Ask for three changes from your partner which are positive & "smart." which means, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time limited. Partner chooses at least one.

Say, "Thank you. That will reduce my fear of... & make me feel...." Partner says, "You are welcome. Giving you that will help me change my resistance to... & grow...."

Try it! Actually listening to another person can significantly increase your connection and the quality of your interaction with any other person--your partner, your children, your family, your co-workers, even a dreaded person with whom you must relate.

If you try this process with your partner and get stuck, you might turn on a tape recorder and see if that helps. The key to this being successful is that when you go back to listen, ONLY, and this is essential, only listen to and learn about yourself. If a tape gets to be another way you show your partner how right you were, or are, s/he will not want to record, again. The key is to use the recorder to learn about YOURSELF.

For the informative, outstanding book on the ideas in this process, read *Getting the Love You Want: A guide for couples* by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D.

Please call for assistance with these excellent techniques that can significantly improve your communications.