

Steps for Successful Communication

Ask yourself before you begin, "How can I get what I need, and how can I give what they need?" ("How can I give love, and how can I receive love?")

Establish a safe word like, "Stop," "Breath," or "I need a timeout."

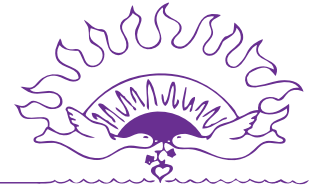
Example of Conflict Resolution:

1. Say what you feel (what emotions), what you need, and/or what you have experienced.
2. Repeat back what you heard the other person saying.
3. Modify what you said until you feel heard.
4. If you are still experiencing not being heard, use your agreed upon safe word. Then repeat steps one, two, and three.
5. If you are still not being heard, get help from an adult—the adult inside of you (not your hurt inner child).
6. It's okay to be angry, but not okay to project your anger onto someone else.
7. Own your part in the conflict; take responsibility for your contribution.
8. Use "I" Statements: "I" believe this...
 - "I" need you to...
 - "I" have this opinion...
 - "I" have a different opinion (or experience)...
 - "I" feel...
9. It is OKAY to disagree, but not OKAY to judge someone else for their experience.
10. No put-downs, no bullying. Check if you are using convincing energy.
11. Feel your feelings and express them (your emotions not your beliefs).
12. Drop the story. (If your goal is to be right, you're not hearing the other person; you're just a good lawyer).

The goal of communication is connection: to feel heard and seen by the other. Always end with asking, "Do you feel heard," and "What do you need from me?" Sometimes, it's nothing more than to be heard. Other times, we

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need our partner to do, or say something differently. We may even need an apology. Be honest at all times; however, being brutal may not get you what you want.

Remember, timing is everything. So before you start a difficult conversation, always ask, "I need to talk to you, is this a good time?" If you need a time-out during this conversation, don't be afraid to ask for it. Take a walk. Take a deep breath. Regroup, and come back again. Be sure you're not walking away, and that you never revisit the conversation. Simply walking away and never retuning is a form of rejection. Whoever takes the break has the responsibility to make time to revisit the conversation until both of you feel heard or find a resolution. Sometimes, it takes a few sessions before we have successfully communicated our needs, or before our partner can hear us. Take the time you need, and find the patience. It will pay off.

*Remember: If your partner is bringing something up to talk about, this is NOT the time for you to bring something different up about them (saying, "What about you!") This is very childish. Make a later date for yourself so you can be present for them now.