



RENEW

TLC Marriage Weekend 2022

Tools to journey together as
your best selves.

WHY DO COUPLES FIGHT?

1. Couples fight because they feel _____ and don't like it.
2. When you feel connected as a couple _____ works.

All the happy neurochemicals are flowing, there is reduced anxiety, and there are these wonderful feelings of well being. And everything works.

3. When you feel disconnected as a couple *nothing works*.

- Cortisol replaces pleasure chemicals
- Anxiety replaces full-aliveness
- Childhood defenses are activated
- Polarization and further disconnection result
- Efforts to reconnect make it worse

THE NEED FOR CONNECTION



STILL FACE EXPERIMENT

DISCUSSION

Connection is our deepest desire. Losing that connection is our deepest fear.

How do you see the human need for connection being a factor in your own relationship?

4. The anxiety of disconnection results in _____.

Symbiosis is the unconscious assumption that other people share your subjective states, thoughts, and feelings.

"You and I are one. And I'm the one!"

It's all about me and any objection to that triggers conflict.

SHE

"Make sure when you load the dishwasher you face the dishes inward, put all the silverware sorted in the tray, and don't turn it on until is full so we don't waste energy."

"You never listen to me!!"

HE

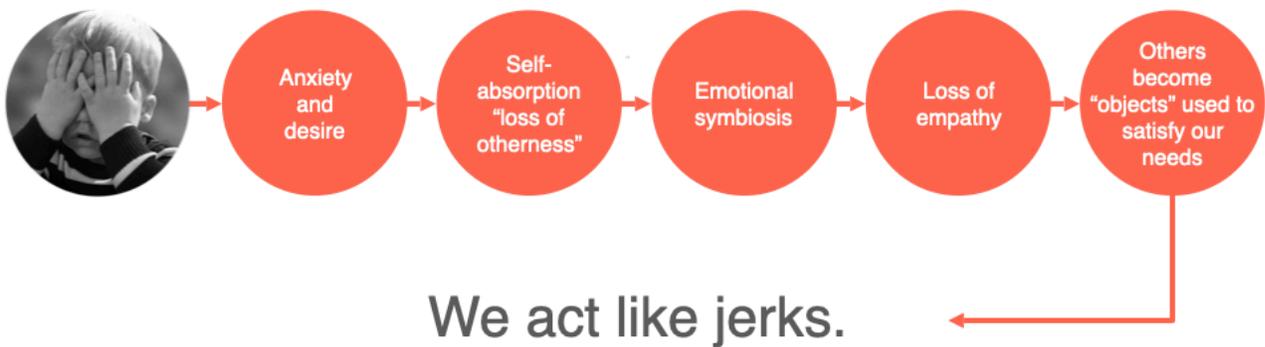
"You know it really doesn't matter which way they are facing. They'll get clean either way. And just put the silverware in there. We can sort it when we put it away. And really it doesn't use that much energy."

"You're always telling me what to do!!"

WHY CAN'T WE FIX IT?

- If you try to fix a problem by talking about the problem, you'll never fix the problem. Why?
- Because the problem is not the problem. The problem is *you feel disconnected*.
- So if you find yourself arguing about the same things over and over again, you're probably not focused on what you really need to be talking about.
- If you're arguing about the dishes, or who is not helping with the kids, or who is not picking up around the house, chances are you're really just talking about the symptoms.
- You have to look deeper, because beneath those symptoms the deeper issue is usually around the lack of connection that you feel in the relationship.

Loss of Connecting = Emotional Wound



Emotional Symbiosis

- A UNIVERSAL human condition.
- We can't see other people as they truly are.
- We make them up in our imagination as we need them to be for us or as we fear they are.
- We believe they are the way we see them.
- When they object to our picture of them, we object to their objection.

DIFFERENCE MUST BE CHALLENGED AND/OR ANNIHILATED

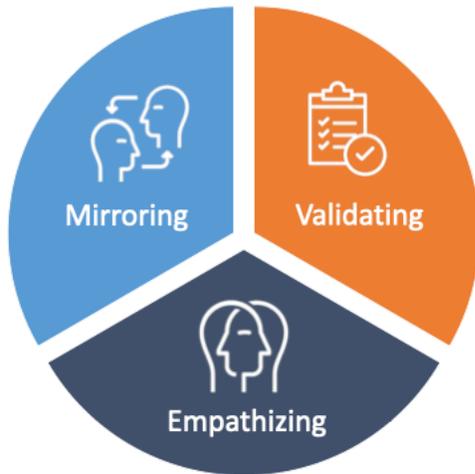
Example: Newlywed husband whose wife didn't want to watch sports with him.

Couple Story

Katie and Frank: "The problem is golf!"

QUESTIONS?

The Couples Dialogue uses powerful sentence stems



Mirroring

"Let me see if I've got it. You said..."

"Did I get it?"

"Is there more about that?"

Validating

"That makes sense, and what makes sense is..."

Empathizing

"I imagine you might be feeling..."

"Is that your feeling?"

"Are there other feelings?"

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START WITH AN APPRECIATION

Why Appreciations?

- Because feelings follow focus. Energy follows attention.
- What you focus on is what you get.
- Negative - partner shows up negative.
- Positive - partner shows up positive.
- The more you focus on the good, the more GOOD there will be to focus on!
- Example: Wife who could not think of anything she appreciated.



APPRECIATION DIALOGUE DEMONSTRATION, PRACTICE & FEEDBACK

APPRECIATION DIALOGUE

SENDER

Ask for appointment
Make eye contact
Take a few deep breaths in sync

THEN SAY...

- *“One thing I appreciate about you is...”*
- *“And what that makes me feel is...”*
- *“What that reminds me of when I was little is...”*

RECEIVER

Grant appointment
Make eye contact
Take a few deep breaths in sync

LISTEN, THEN SAY...(after each statement)

- *“Let me see if I got you. You said...”*
- *“Did I get it?” (add or correct)*
- *“Is there more about that?”*

SUMMARIZE

- *“Let me see if I got all that. In summary you are saying...” “Did I get it all?”*
- *“You got it.”*
- *“Thanks for sharing that.”*
- *“Thanks for listening.”*

END WITH 1 MIN. FULL-BODY HUG

THE BRAIN

To understand our relationships we need to understand our brain.

The fundamental question is “Is it safe or not?”

Connection cannot occur when Fight, Flight, or Freeze is engaged.

News about the brain: Having a healthy contributes to having a healthy brain...not the other way around!

YOUR FIGHTING STYLE

- Fighting styles were developed as a way of coping that we are still unconsciously using today.
- When your partner triggers pain from your past your default reaction is to go into a defense mode you learned in childhood.

1. The _____

We either conserve our feelings by drawing them into ourselves...

2. The _____

...or we explode our energy outward toward our partner and the world.

WHAT IS YOUR FIGHTING STYLE?



MAXIMIZER
(HAILSTORM)



MINIMIZER
(TURTLE)

A child wanted mother’s attention. “I haven’t got time right now. Later.” But “later” never came. This happened repeatedly until the child either *went away* or *became so obnoxious* she got mom’s attention.

- Your fighting style is based on how you learned to cope with your *wounds, frustrations* and *unmet needs* in childhood.
- In adult relationships either of these reactions puts safety in jeopardy and leads to a failed conversation and a feeling of disconnection.
- These defense strategies became part of your whole neural system. The problem is when you go into your childhood defense mode, that's what activates the childhood wounds of your partner.

3. If your primary caretaker was _____ you may tend to be a minimizer (turtle).

You don't want to be controlled or smothered. So you can detach easily from an emotional connection.

4. If your primary caretaker was _____ you may tend to be a maximizer (hailstorm).

You will vie for attention, throwing yourself on the floor in a tantrum if necessary until someone meets your need. Sound familiar?

5. _____ is expressed by things like:

- Over-involvement
- Smothering
- Mind-reading
- Invasive

6. _____ is characterized by:

- Under-involvement
- Detached
- Disinterest
- Avoidant

7. If you carry a wound of abandonment or rejection, you may tend to be a _____.

8. If you carry a wound of a parent smothering or controlling you, you may be a _____.

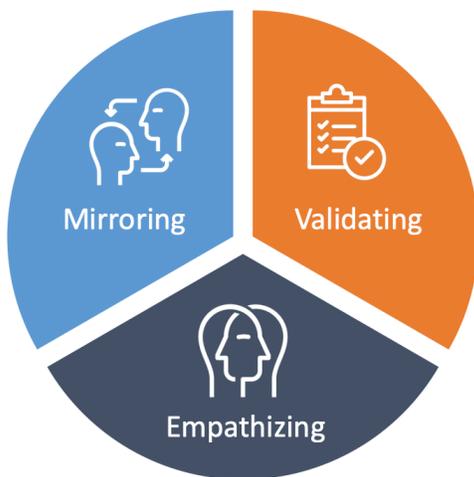
9. It's very important to know that 90% of my upset is from the _____.
10% is from the _____.

WHAT IS YOUR FIGHTING STYLE?

Who is a hailstorm? Who is a turtle?

- These defenses helped you survive your childhood. You get a gold star for that!
- But that defense will not work in your adult relationship.
- So we have to become conscious of it and learn how to regulate it and dissolve it so it won't be a continual barrier to your intimate connection with each other.

The Couples Dialogue uses powerful sentence stems



Mirroring

"Let me see if I've got it. You said..."
"Did I get it?"
"Is there more about that?"

Validating

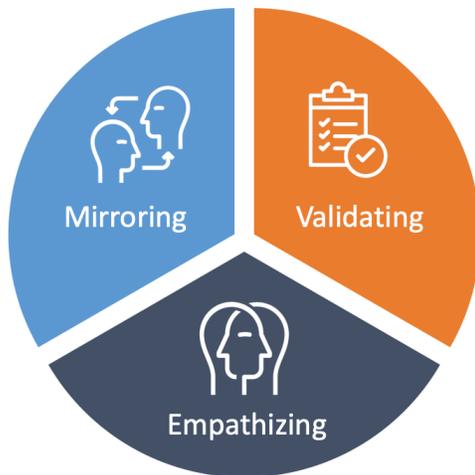
"That makes sense, and what makes sense is..."

Empathizing

"I imagine you might be feeling..."
"Is that your feeling?"
"Are there other feelings?"

x

The Couples Dialogue Has A 3-Part Structure



Mirroring

- Says, “You matter.” “What you have to say matters.”
- When 2 people are talking they hear on average 13%.
- Mirroring helps you hear 100%

Validating

- Says, “You make sense. And what makes sense is...”
- Although you may see it differently you see how your partner makes sense.
- One person sees a 6. The other person sees a 9.
- Conflict shifts from “you VS. me” to “you HEAR me”.
- Helps the sender come out of their entrenchment.
- Dissolves the power struggle.
- Makes space for two separate realities and identities to connect.

Empathizing

- Empathy is the human yearning.
- It’s meeting them in the space between.
- It’s walking into another person’s world and feeling what they are feeling.
- You tell them what you imagine THEY are feeling, not what YOU have felt.
- I’m experience you experiencing you. I’m experiencing you experience yourself.
- Creates connection across difference, through shared, understood feeling.

1. Ask for an appointment.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Take 3 deep breaths.

SENDER RESPONSIBILITY TIPS

- Use “I” language: “I feel, I need, I want.” (avoid using “You never... You always...”)
- Talk about what “I feel” not what “You did”.
- Send all information respectfully and with a kind tone of voice.
- Be succinct. Avoid flooding your partner using too many words.
- Never shame, blame or criticize - **NOT EVER!**
- Ask for what you want rather than tell your partner what NOT to do, or what they are doing wrong.

RECEIVER RESPONSIBILITY TIPS

- Try to put your perspective in the corner and focus on what the sender is saying.
- Remember to be curious, accepting, and non-judgmental.
- Ask “Is there more?” with real curiosity to show you care.
- Remember your feelings will follow your intentional actions.
- What you focus on is what you will get.

Another Tip For The Receiver

If you feel overloaded raise your hand...

Tell your partner:
“Let me see if I can mirror
what you’ve said so far.”



DEMONSTRATE AND PRACTICE COUPLES DIALOGUE

FRUSTRATION DIALOGUE

SENDER

Ask for appointment
Make eye contact
Take a few deep breaths in sync

ALWAYS START WITH APPRECIATION

- *"One thing I appreciate about you is..."*
- *"And what that makes me feel is..."*

THEN SHARE FRUSTRATION

- *"It was frustrating when..."*
- *"When that happened, I felt..."*
- *"That reminds me of when I was little and..."*
- *"When I experience that frustrating behavior, what I really want is _____."*
(a different and positive behavior)

- Yes or no. If no, try again.

- Yes or no. If no, try again.

END WITH 1 MIN. FULL-BODY HUG

RECEIVER

Grant appointment
Make eye contact
Take a few deep breaths in sync

MIRROR

- *"Let me see if I got you. If I did, you said..."*
- *"Did I get it?" (add or correct)*
- *"Is there more about that?"*

"Thanks for sharing that."

MIRROR

- *"Let me see if I got you. If I did, you said..."*
- *"Did I get it?" (add or correct)*
- *"Is there more about that?"*

- **Summarize** *"To summarize what I heard you say..."*

VALIDATE

- *"You make sense, and what makes sense is..."*
- *"Is that the validation you need?"*

EMPATHIZE

- *"I can imagine your feel..."*
- *"Did I empathize with you?"*