

Session 5: Conflict Resolution

Resolving issues, both big and small.

Toilet-Seat Theory of Marriage

It is the mundane events of everyday life that build love in marriage.

For example, whether a man puts the toilet seat down holds a major clue to the success of a marriage: it is a sign that he understands and respects his wife's needs and is open to the kind of giving and taking of influence that leads to long-term marital stability.

Dr. Gottman has followed 670 couples, from newlyweds to retirees, and has found that only 20% of divorces are caused by an affair.

"Most marriages die with a whimper," he says, "as people run away from one another, slowly growing apart."

~New York Times, Hara Estroff Marano, May 1997

Dig Deep: Communicate to Resolve Conflict

Communication can be hard. What are some conflicts you have struggled to communicate to your spouse? Take time to name a few.

When changing habits, you need a new routine. The beginning of this routine is to take some time to prepare for your discussion instead of launching into the topic spontaneously, or when you are full of emotion about the topic.

**PRAY and DEEP
BREATH**

Why do I feel this way?

PROCESS

What has my spouse done that contributes to this feeling?

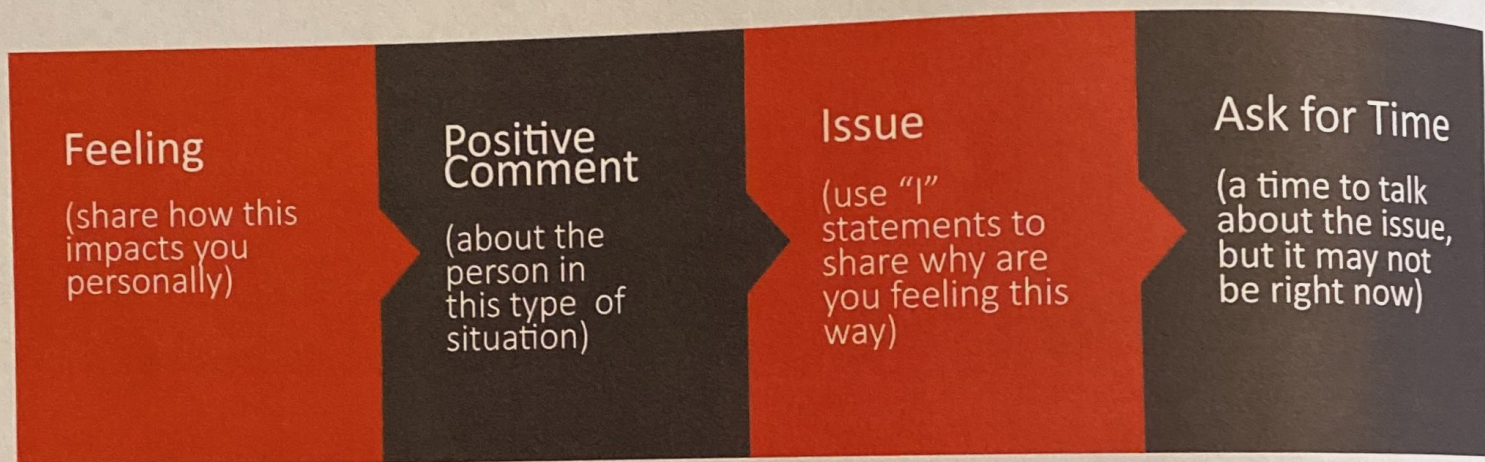
PLAN

What am I going to say to convey how I feel?

Assertive Communication

Our goal is to help you be more assertive in your communication. Let's learn a formula to help—like training wheels for a new bike rider. It will seem odd at first because it is different and seemingly foreign.

Assertive Communication Formula



Example:

I am feeling frustrated. I am thankful for how hard you work, but I need to have some more one-on-one time together. I want to talk about this.

I'm frustrated. The speaker first lets the hearer know what they are feeling.

I am thankful for how hard you work. The speaker states a positive about the person and the situation.

I also want to spend more one-on-one time with you. The speaker now states the issue.

I want to talk about this. The speaker now allows the hearer time to process what they have just said.

The Feeling Tree

Many of us have limited vocabulary to describe how we are feeling. We default to “mad” or “sad” instead of searching for a more accurate word. Try to grow your emotional vocabulary in order to communicate more effectively and deal with conflict.

