

The 4-Step Basic Communication Tool



**How to Get a (Loving) Response
From Your Spouse**

BY DR. BOB HUIZENGA

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This Tool emerged from many years and clinical hours as a Marriage and Family Therapist.

The **4-Step Tool** enables you, as it has many, to approach your spouse or partner knowing what to say and do that stand the best chance of getting a positive and loving response.

No more getting hooked into emotional games that swirl until both give up or one walks away.

You will practice and develop this Tool over time until it automatically and easily flows and attracts the kind of loving relationship that honors and acknowledges you in a powerfully loving way.

Key Points about The 4-Step Tool

1 USING THIS TOOL MAY SEEM STRANGE AND AWKWARD AT FIRST.

This is typical. You feel most comfortable and “at home” using the old words and ways of getting their attention, or **trying** to get their attention. This comfort and familiarity, however, does not bring success, only another dead end attempt to get understanding and love.

Welcome the uneasiness, for it means you are headed in the right direction.

2 WHEN USING THE TOOL, YOU NO LONGER GIVE AWAY YOUR POWER TO YOUR PARTNER OR SPOUSE.

This is huge. You are responsible for getting the type of response you want. **You hold the power.**

Begging, pleading, manipulating, conning, demanding or any other tactic to “pull” something from your spouse or partner, only generates more distance, resistance and “the game.”

Your spouse’s got you! They are in control. You are the victim.

You become a slave to “the game.”

3. THE USE OF THIS TOOL IS NOT ABOUT CHANGING THE MARRIAGE OR RELATIONSHIP OR WANTING YOUR SPOUSE TO CHANGE.

This Tool is about stating your position, calmly, directly and powerfully. This Tool contains strong elements of “Charging Neutral,” another Tool that I teach.

4. THIS TOOL REMOVES THE BLAME, JUDGMENT, HOSTILITY AND FEAR FROM YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

You become FREE to hold your head high, see through the distancing behavior of your spouse and be who you truly are, without self-judgment or self-blame.

Step 1

Your Observation

State clearly what you see or hear or notice.

Refrain from judging your spouse. Instead, describe body language, tone of voice, use of words - any observation as you emotionally “stand back” and merely observe.

Begin with the word “When.”

EXAMPLES:

- When I see that look on your face...
- When I hear you telling me that i should...
- When I hear you calling me a _____...
- When I hear you start talking about _____...
- When I see you back away...
- When I see you get quiet...
- When we are in the car together and there is silence....
- When we jump in bed together...
- When we begin talking about...
- etc.

Step 2

Your Response

You follow up on the “when” comment with “this brings up in me...”

You describe YOUR experience related to what you just observed.

This is important: Focus on what you think and/or feel. If you can do both, great.

Hint: Identifying your feelings and thoughts is NOT easy. You were not taught to do that and the world around you does not encourage such self awareness.

EXAMPLES:

- When I hear your voice getting angry, this brings up a knot in my stomach and think, “oh no, here we go again.”
- When I see you backing away, this brings up a quivering in my chest and think I might lose you.
- When we begin talking about money, this brings up a back that tightens and think you won’t hear what I say.
- When I hear you ask a question about the affair, that brings up a strong desire to scream and run away.
- When I hear you calling me a loser, that brings up a throat that tightens and I have to hold myself back from screaming at you.
- When we jump in bed, that brings up tension and I begin thinking of what might or might not happen.

Step 3

Proclaim your dislike.

Let your spouse or partner know you are not satisfied with what you are thinking or feeling.

EXAMPLES:

- When I hear your voice getting angry, this brings up a knot in my stomach and think, “oh no, here I go again.” And, I don’t like the knot in my stomach and the tension I feel.
- When I see you backing away, this brings up a quivering in my chest and think I might lose you. I hate the thought of losing you and how it feels.
- When we begin talking about money, this brings up a back that tightens and think you won’t hear what I say. I don’t like feeling this way and believing you turn a deaf ear.

- When I hear you ask a question about the affair, that brings up a strong desire to scream and run away. I don't like this feeling of wanting to explode, or have this image of me running away, and then exploding.
- When I hear you calling me a loser, that brings up a throat that tightens and I have to hold myself back from screaming at you. I hate not being able to talk confidently and calmly.
- When we jump in bed, that brings up tension and I begin thinking of what might or might not happen. I don't like being nervous or scared of what might happen.

Step 4

Very simply, ask for support.

EXAMPLES:

- When I hear your voice getting angry, this brings up a knot in my stomach and think, "oh no, here I go again." And, I don't like the knot in my stomach and the tension I feel. I would like your support.
- When I see you backing away, this brings up a quivering in my chest and think I might lose you. I hate the thought of losing you and how it feels. I would like your support in working this through.
- When we begin talking about money, this brings up a back that tightens and think you won't hear what I say. I don't like feeling this way and believing you turn a deaf ear. I would like your support in making those changes for me.
- When I hear you ask a question about the affair, that brings up a strong desire to scream and run away. I don't like this feeling of wanting to explode, or have this image of me running away, and then exploding. I would like your support during this crisis.
- When I hear you calling me a loser, that brings up a throat that tightens and I have to hold myself back from screaming at you. I hate not being able to talk to confidently and calmly. I hate not being able to talk confidently and calmly. I would like your support.
- When we jump in bed, that brings up tension and I begin thinking of what might or might not happen. I don't like being nervous or scared of what might happen. I would like you to support me as I work this through.

Conclusion

WHAT IF YOUR SPOUSE DOESN'T RESPOND WELL?

Your spouse may not respond at all, or with anger, or with a quizzical look on their face. Or, they may mock you or in other ways deflect from what you are asking.

Don't be surprised. The old cliché: Rome wasn't built in a day.

If you “Charge Neutral” while making the statement, you are establishing a good baseline for constructive change in the future.

Just note how your spouse responds.

Keep at it!

DOES IT FEEL WEIRD?

Asking for support or help may seem rather odd and most likely uncomfortable. Again, asking for help with “your” problem when you want to blame or place responsibility on your spouse seems a stretch.

Here’s another angle: What would you like from your spouse? What would it feel like if they were to ask YOU for help, support and encouragement?

Do you think perhaps you would welcome that request? I imagine you would more than welcome that request.

DEVELOP NEW BRAIN CELLS.

Remember, this may seem uncomfortable since you were taught to seduce, manipulate, bully, plead, or beg to get something from another person. Or, you were taught to see “it” as a problem that needed to be solved.

You were not taught or modeled to approach the impasse as something from which you can learn and grow.

You need a Tool to build warmth, trust and transparency in your relationship.

You need to create new brain cells and new skills and strategies to co-create a relationship of deep and rich love.

Your Assignment

I would like you to use this tool for the next week. Here are some tips:

- 1. Keep this Tool in the back of your mind during the day. Use it, experiment if a problematic situation arises.**
- 2. Keep a journal, if you find writing helpful.**
- 3. Review before bedtime the use of the Tool.**
- 4. Future pace: imagine using the tool as you picture a future event.**

Take a couple minutes to complete a short survey. Your input is critical as a way to improve the Marriage Building Online Course.

Please click here, it will only take a couple minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DQLDP3D>

Wishing you the best,
Dr. Bob Huizenga

About Dr. Huizenga

Dr. Bob Huizenga is an author, researcher and coach specializing in relationships of emotional investment. He began his practice as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in 1981 working since then with thousands of individuals and couples wanting better relationships.

In 2002 he wrote one of the first and best selling ebooks on infidelity, “**Break Free From the Affair.**” In addition, Dr. Huizenga finished his new ebook, “**Save Your Marriage Forever - the 3 EASY LOVE Laws,**” and the **Marriage Building Online Course** reflecting his research and marital clinical experience over the past 30 years.

For more wisdom from Dr. Huizenga, visit him at:

www.break-free-from-the-affair.com

www.saveamarriageforever.com