

Resolution: Repairing After a Rupture

Goal: To Restore Connection

Summarize and Affirm: After both parties fully listen to one another (using the awareness worksheet) summarize what you heard and affirm the person to whom you are listening. Even if you disagree you can express understanding for their feelings and thank them for listening and/ or sharing. Remember to be aware of your body language, voice tone, and facial expressions.

Reassurance and Comfort: Sometimes being deeply listened too brings resolution. Perhaps your partner just needs comfort; a hug, holding, affirming and/ or reassurance.

Ownership: Review the prompting event and consider your own behavior. Do you need to apologize? Do not blame, rationalize or excuse bad behavior but rather own and apologize for any mistakes, over reacting, unkind words, inappropriate anger, defensiveness or selfishness. Apologize by summarizing your errors, asking forgiveness and stop. Don't say, "But you..."

Needs: Each of you take turns asking your partner, "What do you need?" or "What would help you move on and feel better?" Listen to the request and repeat it back in your own words.

Requests: If you are asking your spouse to change a behavior make the request specific and observable. (Not "I want you to spend more time with the family"...rather "Could you plan one night per week to be available for game night with the family?" Consider your spouse's history and skill level in your request.. Ask yourself, "Is my request reasonable?" "Does my spouse have the skill level to be successful?"

Compromise: Remember we can win the battle but lose the war. Look for resolutions that make both people feel like they have been heard. Try for a win/win rather than a win/lose. If you are stuck, stop and have each partner write several possible plans or solutions. Share your ideas with one another so you are looking at more than one option.

Test a Solution: If one spouse is reluctant to proceed with a plan or proposal, agree to try one possible solution for a specified period of time. Set a date to review how the idea is working. Make adjustments after evaluating or try the other partner's idea for a specified time.

Agree to Disagree: Sometimes in marriage we need to agree to disagree. There should be a balance of give and take rather than one partner always getting their way.

Forgiveness: "I need to forgive or be forgiven."

Little to Nothing: "You know, I don't think I need anything right now, I just feel better having gotten that off my chest."

Reassurance: "I need to hear from you that things will be OK, or that you will work on this or that you still really love me!"

Negotiation: "I need for us to find some middle ground or a compromise on this!"

Analysis / problem solving: “Would you help me figure out how to solve or fix this problem?”

Comfort and Nurture: “Would you please hold me and comfort me while I cry?”