

Episode 55:

Drama-Inviting Someone Out

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[00:02:48]

Good morning and welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast for the week of April 18th, 2015. So excited that you're joining me this morning. We're going to talk about drama. So, we've recorded a podcast on drama, and if you want to know more specifically what drama is, I'd encourage you to listen to that podcast. I am going to hit just a little bit on the different characters of drama but I'm not going to go into how they all show up. I want to talk about how, when I go into drama or when someone else goes into drama, how to address that and make sure that you stay connected and you don't get sucked into someone else's drama. When I say "sucked in" it sounds like they will do that to you, and the Truth is, is that you will have to use your choice to go into their drama with them. But I'll tell you, drama is so seductive.

So, people are either in drama or they're not, so all throughout the day, we're either being invited to live in drama, join drama, or to stay out of drama. And drama has three characteristics:

One is the victim.

One is the rescuer.

One is the persecutor.

When I'm in victim, I'm in the state of wanting to be irresponsible. I don't want to take responsibility for anything that I'm doing, I want to blame other people, I want people to feel sorry for me, I want them to perceive me as incapable, or it's not my fault. So, the hallmark of victim is no responsibility.

The hallmark of the rescuer is to control. I want to control outcomes, I want to control the way you perceive me, I want to control whether you care about me, or love me, or like me, or want me, or need me. I want to control all of that. I don't want there to be conflict, and so I'm interested in doing whatever is necessary so I can control the emotions that you feel and also that I feel. That's the rescuer.

The hallmark of the persecutor is that they're just aggressive and mean. It's like, "You made me do it" kind of a thing.

So, these three roles bounce around inside one's own head or I can be in a drama dynamic with another person. And like I said, there's only two states of being: it's either I'm in drama or I'm not in drama. And so, I want to be as conscientious as possible to manage and hear my shame, because shame is what disconnects me and invites me to go into drama. That is the **only** way that I can do into drama, is I have to get out of Reality, I have to disconnect from Reality. And when I disconnect from Reality, it means I'm believing something, I'm choosing to buy into something, that is not real.

So, what does that mean, not real? What I mean by that is that it's not connected to Reality. It's just not what's actually happening. It's not the Truth. The Truth (remember, the

difference between true and Truth) is tangible, it's rational, it's the facts, it's concrete, it's ever-lasting. True is based on emotions. It's the Truth that I own a blue car. It's true that I don't like the color blue—or blue is a bad color is probably a better example.

Now, that is not the Truth, the Truth is, is that my car is blue, and it's not the Truth that blue is a bad color, it just means that I don't like the color blue. That's it. Period. So, true is based around emotions. The Truth is what actually is. So, any time get out of Reality, we get out of the Truth. And when we're out of the Reality, we are disconnected from ourselves and from others.

[00:07:36] Question #1

So, here's a question. This podcast is going to be talking about drama, and I have a handful of questions that my listeners have asked and so I want to answer these. And these are all related to drama. So, the question is *how do you know if you're in drama or just griping about something?* Isn't that a great question. *How do I know if I'm in drama or if I'm just griping?*

The place that you're going to want to look is you're going to want to ask yourself if you have disconnected from Reality, because in Reality, you get to gripe. Let's say that a winter storm just came through, and there was a lot of wind, and some of my neighbor's weeds, or dirt, or maybe even toys ended up on my yard. Or let's say that their dog keeps pooping in my yard. So, those are things that are actually happening—it's the Truth that the dog is doing its business on my yard and that this winter storm brought all this stuff from their yard over to my yard. And let's say it's the Truth that this neighbor of mine is very negligent and doesn't clean up their yard and so when the winter storm came, it was really easy for all this stuff to come blowing over into my yard. So, that's the Truth.

This person said gripe, gripe about something. In the Truth, it's okay to be emotionally honest. So, I get to have my emotions about the experience. When I walk outside and I either step in the dog's business or I almost step in it, it is going to elicit an emotion. And as long as I stay centered, and I stay responsible for myself, and I stay emotionally honest (so it means I don't go gossip, and I don't throw thing at his house) but I take responsibility for my emotions, it's okay for me to gripe—because that's the word they used—it's okay for me to gripe and go over and knock on the door responsibly and say, “I have a little present for you. Come over here, I want to show it to you.” And you get to tell them how you're being impacted emotionally by the fact that the dog is pooping in your yard. So, that's emotional honesty.

When I'm in a state of Reality and not in drama, I am being emotionally honest and I'm being responsible for my emotions. I'm making appropriate choices to manage my emotions and not go and harm someone, not retaliate, not go to a place of shame where it says, “These things always happen to me, this isn't fair, how come the neighbor is persecuting me?” I mean, none of those things are true. So, as long as I stay out of that, then I'm able to stay in Reality where emotional honesty and accountability exist.

When I go into drama, emotional honesty and accountability don't exist. For example, I almost step in the dog's poo that's out in my yard and I get really angry. Now, right there I'm still okay, I'm still connected. That "caused me" to get angry. But it's what I *do* with my emotions. This is the irresponsible piece: if I become irresponsible for my emotions or with my emotions, then I go into drama. And I can go into drama in a million different ways. So, there's no way to talk about all the different ways that I could act out in drama, but the key is, is that I have an emotion and then I don't take responsibility for it. I react. I lash out. I blame. I do something to hurt that person. That's drama. I go into victim. I feel victimized. That's drama.

So, the question is *how do I know if I'm in drama or just griping about something?*

And the key there is that I take responsibility for my emotions and I make choices—I use my free agency—to choose to **respond** instead of **react**, and go and talk to that person and let them know how I'm being affected.

And so, that's your key right there, is that it's fine to have the emotion, it's what are you going to do with your emotion? Are you going to be reactionary or are you going to respond to it? And when you respond, you take responsibility for your choices.

[00:13:10] Question #2

Here's another question about drama. *How do you communicate with people who feel like they already communicate well, but really, it's hindering how they communicate? And so, if you go to give them feedback, they become emotionally defensive.*

What I'm hearing this person ask is, they're in a dynamic with somebody that is in drama. Because when you're communicating with someone and you give them feedback about how they're communicating, they will humbly take that feedback and not react. But if someone's in drama, they will just say, "I'm a good communicator and I don't want to hear whether you think that that's accurate or not."

I chuckle because when you're such a good communicator, the way you know you're a good communicator is that the people who are taking or receiving the communication feel really good, and centered, and they understand your communication. It's not just I dictate whether I'm a good communicator, it's that the person I'm interacting with will acknowledge that as well, so that's kind of funny.

The question, *how do you communicate with people who feel like they already communicate so well, but really it's almost hindering it because they know how to, so that they are very emotionally defensive on how they respond?*

That was a bit confusing. I read it exactly as it was written but what I believe the person is asking is, this person believes that they're a good communicator and when I give them feedback that I'm not following their communication, they get emotionally defensive. So, what they're saying is that the person they're interacting with is in drama. They are in

victim, and they might even be in persecutor depending on how they react. They say they get emotionally defensive so that might even be persecutory. And so, the best way to respond when someone is not open to hearing feedback about how they are responding is to be able to recognize that they're in drama—for sure they're in victim—and get curious. Get curious about it. So, instead of coming at them and saying, “Excuse me, you're in drama. I don't know if you know that or not, but you're in victim and every time I say anything, you get emotionally defensive.” That’s not going to go over well. But if you will say to them, “I'm curious to know what you mean by that.” Or, “You know, when I hear you say this, I wonder if this is what you think.”

And so, you ask questions of curiosity. Or you could even say something like, “I’ve noticed that when you say this, it seems like you are a bit on edge or maybe even defensive. Is that true?”

So, you can say what's going on, but if you'll state it in a question of curiosity, the person more than likely will not get defensive, if you say it as, “Is this real for you? What I'm noticing is this, do you resonate with this?”

When you come at someone and you say, “You're doing this.” Or, “When you do this, it means this.” And you make kind of like an absolute statement, people usually get very defensive. And so, when someone’s defensive, it means they're in drama. That’s just the case. So, if I get defensive, I know that I'm already in drama. And so, if someone doesn't know about drama, then your job is to not exacerbate them going into drama, your job is to invite them to come *out* of drama. And the way you can do that is to not enter it with them, which means be emotionally centered so you're not getting reactionary to their drama, and then ask questions of curiosity.

So, for example, if someone gets defensive, so let’s say someone comes to my door and it’s a mother and a daughter, and I start giving feedback to the daughter about her presentation—so they're trying to sell me something. And the daughter’s talking to me and the mom’s standing next to her, and I give feedback to the daughter that it sounds like what you're selling is rather manipulative, and then the mother gets defensive about my statement to the daughter. Here's what I can say. Instead of saying, “You sound like you're manipulating me.” What I can say is, “Help me understand why this product will really serve me.” Or, “Help me understand why *you* really like this product and why you would want me to buy it because you are so fond of it.”

So, I ask questions of curiosity instead of feeling like I'm being manipulated by this girl and the mom’s getting defensive because I'm saying something that I might think is the Truth; like I might feel really strongly that I feel like I'm getting manipulated by this girl, but if I want to mitigate the girl and also the mother’s reaction, I'm going to ask statements of curiosity. It’s just a real quick way to help someone 1) not be defensive, and 2) it invites them out of this drama position.

[00:19:15] Question #3

Here's another question. *Does living in honesty mean that you never brush anything off, you never just chalk it up to the other person—that maybe they didn't intend to be that way, or that you can just move on? Do you always confront feelings no matter what the cost to others? I'm just wondering if that is what living a centered and honest life should look like. Sometimes, I want to just say, "Lighten up."*

So, what this person is asking is does living in honesty mean that you never brush anything off, you never just chalk it up to someone just didn't mean to.

And the answer to that is, it really depends on you. You get to decide what you need to confront and what you don't. So, I might need to confront someone where somebody next to me may not need to. So, let's say I'm walking along and someone spits on the ground right where I'm stepping, or maybe I'm standing there and someone spits right by my shoe. I might feel a need to confront that person in emotional honesty. Someone else may want to confront that person, but because they go into drama, they don't give themselves permission to. And then, there could be a third response where someone has the experience but they don't feel the need to confront. Not because they're going into drama but because they just don't feel like it's emotionally necessary for them to confront that person, they'd rather just ignore it.

And it really depends on your triggers. If you are being triggered, which means it triggered some kind of experience in you or some type of intense emotional reaction in you, then you might consider confronting them, but at the same time, you've got to take into account the whole setting. Is it safe to confront this person? Do you know this person? Do you know how they typically respond when you confront them? There are lots of different angles that you've got to look at before you confront. And all the different angles you want to look at are going to come back to, is this something that you feel like you need to do because it's going to invite that person to connect with you?

So, if I'm standing there and someone spits either on my shoe or next to my shoe, I would think to myself, *wow, I wonder why they just did that*. I definitely would have an emotional reaction to that, like disgusting, or sick, or I can't believe they just did that, right? That doesn't mean I'm in drama at that point, that just means I'm having an emotional response and reaction to this.

So, I'm going to have to look at who is this person, how do I know them, is it safe to confront? Why would I confront? That's another question. Is this someone that I care about, that I want to be close to? Does it matter if I don't confront them? I mean, is it going to change my relationship with that person if I don't confront them? Am I going to pull away from them if I don't confront them?

So, I've got to look at all these different angles and see why I'm doing it, and if the answer is, I want to stay connected to this person therefore I must be emotionally honest with them,

because if I'm not honest, then I will hold a resentment and I will slowly pull away from them.

So, as I look at all these different angles, I want to recognize if it's something that I feel is a need to confront because I want to stay in an emotionally honest and connected relationship with them.

Now, I know that there are other settings and other experiences that will happen to you that you probably are going to have to ask different questions, but looking at it from a position of, "Do I want to stay emotionally connected to this person?" is probably going to satisfy 95 percent of your situations that you run into.

There are other situations where you want to be emotionally connected to the cause, or an ideology, or a movement. It's always going to be about connection—that's what you're looking for. I'm going to confront this thing, or this person, or be a part of this movement because I want to be *connected* to it. So, you're always going to look for connection, like do I need to connect here? Because sometimes, someone can do something like that and there really isn't any need to connect with them, you just need to ignore it and move away. And that doesn't mean that you went into drama.

Now, if you're in your head, and you're obsessing around it, and you can't get let it go, and you're really angry at them for hours on end, then you probably *are* in drama inside your own mind. And so, you'd have to get responsible for that and understand why you're taking that experience so personal.

So, does living honestly mean that you never brush anything off? No. Living honestly means that you have enough awareness around yourself and enough honesty around yourself that you know what to confront and what not to confront. And sometimes, you confront things just in your own mind and that's adequate. But the thing that you're always looking for is, "Will I be emotionally connected or disconnected if I do or don't confront this thing, this person, this issue?"

[00:25:51] Question #4

The last question around drama. *What would be a good invitation to present to someone who is clearly in a distracted mode?* Another way to say that question is *what is a good invitation to present to someone who is clearly in drama?* Because if I'm in distraction, I am absolutely in drama. So, *how do I invite someone to come out of drama?* That's another way to say the question.

That's a really challenging one because it really depends on how well you know the person and that idea of *I want to be emotionally connected to that person*. And so, if I'm in a relationship where there's emotional vulnerability and my family member, or my friend, or someone I'm emotionally connected to is in drama, I first have to be able to recognize the drama. I have to see it, I have to hear it, in order to invite them to come out. Because if I can't see it and hear it, then the possibility is that I'm in drama, too. I'm in it with them.

And so, I have to make sure that I'm not in that state with them in order to invite them to come out. Because if I start trying to invite them, I could be doing it for a very inappropriate motive, like I'm inviting them from a position of rescuer. So, they're in victim, and I'm in rescuer, and I'm inviting them to come out. But how hypocritical of me, because I'm in it. And so, I have to be very clear that I'm not in drama with them before I start thinking about inviting them to do anything.

So, make sure that you're not in drama with them, and then you want to empathize with them, you want to validate them, you want to understand why they're in drama before you can invite them to come out. And so, listen to what they're saying. Listen to their situation.

Maybe somebody goes into the kitchen and the last brownie has been eaten, and they pick up the knife and they throw it in the pan in anger and they're like, "Really? You guys ate all the brownies? I didn't even get one. I cannot believe that you guys did that. I feel so unloved in this house." And then they walk away. That would be a good example of someone going into drama. So you can see it.

Going over and inviting them to come out is going to look like this. You first are aware that you're not going into it with them, so you're not going over to rescue, so you've got to know what your intentions are and your motives. And so, you go over to them and you say something that's empathic, something that's connecting like, "I was sitting in the living room when you walked into the kitchen and I heard your disappointment when you went to get a brownie. Do you want to talk about it?"

So, what you just heard me do is I validated them and I asked a curious question—"Would you like to talk about it?" Those are invitations for them to come out of drama. Though I did not say, "I think you're in victim, do you want to come out?" If I were to say that, they're probably going to become more steeped in the victim and not be willing to come out, because what I did not acknowledge was their upset around the situation, around the brownies. I didn't even comment on it. All I did was get critical about their being in victim and they need to get out. That doesn't help people.

So, what you want to do is you want to become empathic with whatever's going on, and then after you've made a couple of validating statements—which are empathic statements—you're going to ask questions of curiosity.

I could say something like, "Were you looking forward to having some brownies tonight?" That's a validating statement and it's also a curious statement. I could also say, "It's really frustrating when you think you're going to have something and someone else has already taken it or eaten it, isn't it?" That's very validating and it's also a very curious question.

And so, just because I'm asking questions of curiosity doesn't mean that they will directly come out of drama, but it's an invitation because what I'm saying is, "I care about you, I see you, you matter to me, and I want to know how you feel about this certain circumstance."

And so, as I talk to them, they might still stay in victim, but as I continue to talk to them and I continue to validate them, they will start feeling safe. And when someone feels safe, they're more willing to relax and come out of the distortion, and/or they're more willing to take your feedback and listen to what you have to say, than if you don't validate them.

So, for example, if I validate this person around the brownies—two or three times I validate them—they're going to be much more willing when I say something like this: “Do you know that the fact that there's no brownies left is not personal to you? Do you know that I was the last one to eat the last brownie? I had no idea that you hadn't had any yet and I am so sorry.”

Those two statements are going to be much better received by someone who has been validated by a handful of statements and asked questions of curiosity, than someone who has not. And those kinds of statements are the ones that invite the person out of drama, because you're going into the Truth, like, “It wasn't personal that the last brownie was eaten.” Or, “I didn't do that on purpose; I didn't know that you hadn't any yet.”

Those are statements of Truth and so it allows the person to come back into the Truth. But the only way for them to hear the Truth or stay in the Truth is to have someone validate them in their drama; so you're validating the emotion. You're not validating the experience of going and not having a brownie left. You're validating the emotion, like the disappointment, and the upset, and the frustration of not finding a brownie. That's what you're validating.

And then, after you've validated, you can give pieces of Truth—because that's what actually will get them out of drama, because drama, remember, is about distortion. And so, if I will validate the emotion and then invite them to come into the Reality, which is where the Truth is, which is where the facts are, which is, *I didn't take the brownie to hurt you*. If I'm willing to do that then the person can come out of drama, or at least it can feel safe to come out of drama. Because I can't make them come out, but I can make myself really safe so that they feel comfortable in coming out of that victim spot and joining me in the Reality.

So, what would be a good invitation to present to someone who is clearly in drama?

1. Validate their emotions.
2. Ask questions that are curious in nature about the experience.
3. After you feel like they have calmed down or they're more present or available to talk with, then you present The Truth about the drama.

So, I I was talking to somebody just today, and she is engaged to a gentleman, and another boy that likes her came up and kissed her. And she was very shocked and taken aback. The fiancé is quite angry with her, saying that she did this on purpose, that she should not have engaged in that way with this boy. And so, in a very real sense, he is in drama because the Truth is, is that she didn't engage. She was figuratively / literally standing there, and he

came in and took something from her. But she feels that she was in the wrong and so they're both in drama. She's in drama and her fiancé is in drama.

And so, what needs to happen is, a lot of validation needs to happen for both of them. Validating their emotions. He needs people in his life to validate his experience and she needs people in her life to validate her experience. And then, once validation happens and questions of curiosity are posed, then both people independently can start looking at the Reality, which is, this other young man took something. He in a very real sense assaulted her. He did not have permission to do that, she did not want that and he took it from her. It was very inappropriate. Those are the facts. That storyline is the Reality. And the other part of the Reality is that she is not culpable for what this young man did.

And so, until she and her fiancé are able to be validated by other people—not by each other but by other people—they're not going to be available to hear the Truth. And so, my hope is, is that they both can receive adequate validation so that they're willing to look at curious questions and then hear the Reality of what happened.

So, these kinds of things happen all day long, we all have experiences, we all go into drama, and so it's our responsibility to recognize our drama and do all that we can to stay out of drama. And in that space where we're out of drama, it's also our responsibility to hear other people's drama and invite them to come out, especially when they're relationships that we want to have emotional connections with.

So, I hope that this was helpful—talking about drama, and what drama looks like, and how to stay out of drama yourself, and how to invite other people to stay out of drama. We will talk to each other in a week. Between now and then, stay connected and we will talk soon. Bye bye.

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