

-- Speaker 0 00:00:00 Welcome to the Closeness Podcast, your new sexual education. My name is T, I'm your host, and today we're looking very closely at a subject that has plagued us all. How do fights and conflict in relationships start? Where does it begin and what can we do about it? Why do we get so caught up in doing battle with the one that we love the most? This episode has probably been a good four or five years in the making. It's something that I've wanted to put out for quite some time, but so much of the other sex education felt like it took precedence. So I think I'm gonna break this up into a two or three part series because there's so much content to cover. That being said, of course, this episode, like all episodes, is not directed towards a single individual person, a partnership, a group of people, an ex-girlfriend, a friend, a client, a lover, whoever.

Speaker 0 00:00:47 It's actually a collection of frustrating things that I've been acquiring, shall we say, over the years, and I wanna share them with you all today. And who knows, maybe some of this will resonate with you because uh, you pull some of this stuff and maybe some of it will resonate because this stuff has been pulled on you for some of us many times. But my hope is more than anything, that rather than you feeling sad, hurt, defensive, upset, angry, whatever it is, whatever this may bring up for you, that you're able to find healing and feel resourced to move past conflict, and that you can actually live a happier, healthier life as a result. Or at the very least, experience some peace in your relationship. And wouldn't that be nice?

Speaker 0 00:01:27 On the other hand, some of these things may not be applicable to you at all, and if so, congratulations. You are not a terrible person. No, just kidding. Congratulations on not doing these things and not having them done to you. But for most of us, if we're honest and we take a good hard look on the inside, we'll be able to relate to many things brought up in this episode. It really comes down to asking how can we be a better person for ourselves and for our partners to avoid conflict? Of course, life is not perfect. Of course, there's going to be times where we all get upset, even for foolish and silly reasons. It happens to us all, but how can we get out of it quickly? How can we not make the whole thing explode and erupt into something terrible when it doesn't need to?

Speaker 0 00:02:06 To me, that's simple, clean, positive communication where both people stay engaged, make eye contact and not battle through it, but work through it together to gain understanding instead of trying to be right or accurate. You wanna be a better communicator so that you're not having drama all the time or conflict finding yourself, as I'm sure you have in silly, trite, irrelevant fights that go nowhere. It feels so important in the moment. And then poof, it's gone until the next one and the next one and the next one. So often people feel like they are in crisis multiple times a week and even multiple times a day where they get so upset and so worked up about something that it feels like the whole world is stopping. It's my hope that after listening to this episode, you're able to resource yourself a little bit better and realize that life does not have to be about moving from crisis to crisis to crisis, or even from being upset to upset again to even more upset.

Speaker 0 00:03:06 Is it okay that we get upset sometimes? Of course. Can I put an exact quantity on how often you should or should not be upset? Of course not. But if you find that you're upset with your partner multiple times a week, or even God forbid, multiple times a day, which also happens, something needs to be looked at. If we're feeling crisis or feeling upset with our same partner over and over again, we've gotta do something about it. Often, conflict is usually the result of a repetitive action that your partner is doing or not doing to you or for you. They either are intentionally not addressing it or seem to enjoy not addressing it or just refuse to address it. Or sometimes we don't speak up about the problem, so we expect our partner to mind read what's going on. We expect them to know what we would have liked them to have done.

Speaker 0 00:03:52 In other words, if you really loved me, you would've done this. If you really love me, you would've chased me. If you really love me, you would --

-- 've stayed for dinner. But they don't say this. And sometimes a partner simply cannot wrap their head around the fact that they actually did something wrong or that you don't like it as their partner because that's how they like it, or that's how another partner liked it and they just can't get it through their head. And so the other partner continues to get more and more and more upset until it turns into anger and an explosion. Once that happens, once someone's needs don't get met or you've requested something over and over again that doesn't get addressed a dozen times, two dozen times, hundreds of times, then it just becomes a trigger, an activation. Then someone just sees red or gets angry or hurt or resentful or upset because the other person isn't listening to them or simply not doing a couple of key things that that partner has asked the other not to do over and over again.

Speaker 0 00:04:54 Now, how does it always wind up being the case that we get paired up with someone who loves to do something we hate? How do they always know how to push our buttons? How do they behave like our mother or father? How do they behave in ways that are completely opposite or different from how we might handle a situation? And so the first tool that I wanna share with you today is a bit more like a law, something that we all know but need to be reminded of from time to time or at least apply it to our intimate lives, and that is simply the concept of cause and effect or action and reaction. Everything that we say or do, especially when it involves a partner, is going to carry either a consequence, a reaction, or a response. It doesn't always have to be negative, it doesn't have to be negative at all, but it is going to carry a result.

Speaker 0 00:05:40 What this literally translates to for conflict is if you're going to have a reaction or say anything or retaliate or get angry, snappy, defensive, resentful, pissy, if you say something that you know you're gonna regret later, it's going to result in something that costs you contrary to what is taught today. We do not just get to do or say whatever we want, however we want, whenever we want, without it carrying some sort of weight or better said, technically speaking, we can do say and act however we want, but the part that we all forget <laugh> to add or remember is that it's going to carry a consequence. And we live in a world today where many live their entire life with total lack of accountability or responsibility. But amazingly, we forget that there are consequences to our actions and words every single time we have a lover's quarrel, a spat, a disagreement or an argument.

Speaker 0 00:06:39 Most of the time, one or both people stay so connected in this incessant back and forth bickering or arguing, and no one has the consciousness or the wherewithal to eject or to get out of the situation. In fact, oftentimes if someone tries to bring things out and says, let's just relax, or something funny actually happens in an argument, but then you get right back to it or someone says, Hey, why are we doing this? Let's just relax. Let's just chill together. The other person's like, screw that. We have to burn it all down and jump right back into the flames. So one of the easiest ways to not engage in conflict and avoid a fight is to take one nice extra moment before reacting or yelling or snapping back or saying something that you're gonna regret. Just take a breath and consider the price that you or your partner may pay for saying that, doing that or behaving like that, there's always going to be one partner who can be a little more present, a little more aware and a little more conscious about what's going on.

Speaker 0 00:07:44 If you're not too far gone and you can catch yourself, take a breath and hold back, man, can you avoid some serious drama? So you simply ask yourself, does saying this nasty thing, making this wild accusation, does intentionally being difficult or obstinate or petty and childish, or does putting your partner down serve myself or the relationship does complaining or fussing or pointing out or trying to be accurate about something or correcting or conniving or cutting someone down? Does taking the time to try to evaluate every single time in place that someone's told you a little white lie, serve the relationship. Do you tell little white lies? Does making an accusation or insinuation serve the relationship? Could it be better --

-- stated differently? Are my actions right now doing something to support this relationship? Are my words supporting this relationship or am I driving it right off a cliff and tanking it? Sometimes some of us and you know who you are actually enjoy provoking or getting revenge or getting angry at our partners and purposely making them feel bad, purposely pushing buttons by putting them down, by using direct insults and in many cases, very indirectly, making accusations, insults, assumptions, being cruel, cold, mean or distant, and knowing that it's gonna push your partner right over the edge and hurt them. If that's you and that's a part of your relationship, take a nice deep breath. Take 10 more and keep listening.

Speaker 0 00:09:20 When thinking about how you should communicate with your partner in a way that actually resolves things or moves them forward, I think there are two ways that we can communicate as humans. One of them is infinitely more powerful and accessible to everyone. It's gonna solve things quicker, it's going to make things easy, and the other is going to catastrophize, run things off the rails, rot your relationship from the inside out. Let's see if you could take a wild guess and distinguish which one is which and also which way you would prefer to have your partner communicate with you for the rest of your life. Would you choose option one or option two? Option one, having a partner who uses extremely subtle and difficult to read communication, someone who doesn't say what they mean or mean what they say. Someone who doesn't express themselves sincerely or honestly or holds back or wants you to read their mind.

Speaker 0 00:10:18 Someone who is fundamentally incapable of answering a direct question or being succinct in their answer. If asked a yes or no question, they enjoy coming up with 55 other ways to branch the conversation out. Suggest that they couldn't possibly know unless it happens to them. Not be able to directly say yes or no, but seems to love taking the conversation off into the woods. Someone who's stubborn and doesn't give in even when they know they're wrong. Someone who if asked a caring and sincere question like, how can we make this work? What's eating away at you? What can I do to make this better right now? How can I support you? How can I love you? How can I listen to you? What do you need right now to help you calm down or for us to be happy together? Might only have answers for you like, I don't know, I told you already, I don't wanna talk about this right now.

Speaker 0 00:11:07 If you don't know or you can't figure it out, you're a moron or someone who will drag you by the collared back into the fire and keep arguing about every other detail except the solution that you just proposed with a question. Someone who when you're having a conversation, derails it or takes it off track by talking about ancillary details as opposed to the matter at hand, even if it does not correlate or relate or is out of context. Someone who can't acknowledge truth even if it's right before their eyes, simply because they feel differently about it or they want their feelings validated even if they're wrong. Being someone who expects your partner to know that when you're behaving poorly about something, you want the opposite of that or that you get to have a certain kind of opinion but they can't, or that you have double standards.

Speaker 0 00:11:53 Someone who expects you to chase them by being mean to you and evacuating someone who wants you to read them and expects you to know their body language and understand exactly what they're going through without speaking it. And if you don't understand it, then they throw a fit or get mad, get defensive, shut down or leave. Would you like to spend the rest of your life with someone who purposely and in a calculating way throws out subtle things as tests, wrenches in your relationship, so to speak? If things are going along just fine, someone comes in and just rips that equanimity right out and probes around just to see what would happen even if they're wrong. Some hair-brained idea, some wild accusation, some strange insinuation, some question that seems provoking, some question that seems like they don't actually want the answer. They just wanna see how you react.

Speaker 0 00:12:43 Someone who when things are going well or even too well decides or needs to be some drama, trauma or something to ruin the ex --

-- perience perhaps because this is how they grew up or this is how a family member showed them love or this is what they're used to, but too much comfort creates turmoil in their lives. Someone who sometimes can't go a week a day, or even an hour before saying something to mess things up. They can't keep the energy high or positive. Someone who will test you or issue tests just to see how you'll react or respond and then torment you or manipulate you when you don't answer in the right way or don't confess to something that you didn't do or don't have the right response or you took a breath or took a moment to think about what they say and now they're accusing you of being a liar.

Speaker 0 00:13:30 Someone who will hypothesize some wild or even hair-brained idea in their own mind that has nothing to do with reality. Believe the story that they have spun or the feeling that they're feeling. Then act as though and treat them as though they did this thing that you created in your head as opposed to just actually asking if it's true or not, and then deciding to believe you. Playing games, setting traps, insinuating and asking similar questions multiple times to make sure that you're getting the accurate answer. In other words, if they ask you something directly like, did you do this? And you say, no, it's followed by, are you sure? Are you sure you're sure? Are you sure there's not something you wanna tell me? Someone who when listening to you, picks apart your answers, and if you've given five valid comments, they find one word or one statement or one part of it that isn't true, focus on that.

Speaker 0 00:14:23 Blow it up, hammer on it and completely insinuate that the rest of your arguments are invalid because of this one. Uh, punctuation mistake or error in your communication, constantly assuming and believing and responding as though your partner said the complete opposite of what they said. They say, I'd love to come over. You say something like, so you're not coming over, right? They said, yes. You believe no. They said they were here. You think they were there? They said they didn't talk to her. You believe they did talk to her? They say, I'm truly sorry. You say you're not truly sorry. They say, I sincerely apologize. They say there is nothing sincere about that. Someone who assumes there's always some sort of hidden meaning in what you say, not being able to survive a compliment, enjoy a compliment, receive a compliment without turning the whole conversation on its butt.

Speaker 0 00:15:09 Communication where someone tells you that they heard something different than what you said, even though what you said has absolutely nothing to do with what they heard. Someone who responds to your clarification by saying, that's not what you said earlier. That's not what you said before. That's not what I heard. And insists that whatever they think they heard before is the end all, be all truth, and that no one is ever allowed to amend what they said before or clarify what they said before or even restate what they said before if they still feel the exact same way. Someone who would rather do battle comparing what you said before and what you said now instead of trying to understand what you actually mean, someone who takes zero responsibility in a fight or argument, someone who thinks they've done absolutely nothing wrong yet somehow thinks that you've done everything wrong.

Speaker 0 00:15:56 Someone who has no trouble saying that everything that you say is absolutely wrong. Someone who's totally unwilling to put themselves in their partner's shoes. And more importantly, notice that when you do put yourself in your partner's shoes, you actually respond and behave the exact same way. Someone who is so unconscious about their behavior that they're always blowing up the relationship, always bringing it to an end, always teetering on some extreme form of drama, not being able to imagine or talk about how you might feel if something happened to you simply because it hasn't happened in exactly that way yet never speaking what's on your mind or being able to speak up, leaving, slamming doors disappearing for one to three days, vanishing, ending everything because of something small or trite, being in the middle of a really loving moment such as having sex or just finishing intimacy, snuggling, cuddling, and then leaping outta bed to start a terrible fight simply because of one sentence that was sai --

-- d or a triggering moment, being able to pressure and annoy and persist and bother and irritate someone over and over and over again.

Speaker 0 00:16:59 But the moment it happens to you, you lose your marbles pushing and pushing and pushing and nudging and nudging and nudging on a subject to try to get a point across or to accuse someone of something. But then when that person defends themselves, they say, oh, I'm done talking about this now this is over. I don't wanna explain myself. I already went over this. I don't wanna repeat myself. I don't wanna regurgitate, I don't wanna rehash. I don't wanna go back in the past. I only wanna move forward. I know how to hear anything that you have to say about this. I don't believe you. You're wrong. I'm right. Pushing and pushing and pushing and pushing and poking and poking and poking and poking and infuriating your partner and pushing them past any and all reason. But then when they have an unusually large reaction to being pushed and pushed and provoked and provoked, acting shocked, insulting them, putting them down, accusing them of not being able to maintain balance and calm and equanimity, accusing them of having anger issues and control issues is in any other kind of issues.

Speaker 0 00:17:48 As long as they don't have to take responsibility for pushing you over the edge, minimizing all of your frustrations and anger. When someone asks you how you're feeling by simply Retorting, I'm fine. It's fine. It will be fine. Okay, I don't care anymore. Leave me alone. But then exploding later on or holding it in and feeling resentful later on, constantly being available to other people, but never being able to ask for what you want, being totally selfish and never being available to other people, and always demanding that you get what you want, making everything about you, making yourself the victim, making accusations or insinuations that your partner did something, but then when they go to defend themselves, letting them know that you don't want to hear it, you have no space for it. You're turned off and you don't care. Someone who goes on and on and on and on about a subject that bothers them repeatedly, but when a partner actually tries to address it or understand it or gives space to it, mentioning something once again like I'm over it.

Speaker 0 00:18:43 I don't wanna talk about it. Someone who stares and glares in the opposite direction, avoiding eye contact at all costs, amplifying their negative energy so everyone in the room can feel how unhappy they are. But when you try to talk to them, they have nothing to say. Looking down, frowning, not allowing the conversation to go anywhere or abandoning the situation and leaving the room hinting or insinuating that you're upset or bothered by something but not coming at it directly and instead poking at your partner so that when they once again defend themselves or explain or give the very best truthful version of what happened to them, it gets dismissed, goes nowhere, gets invalidated or is never even heard or understood. Someone who may listen to your points, take them all in. But when you give pause and allow them to respond back, they never, ever, ever can concede.

Speaker 0 00:19:29 That's a good point. That's true. I see what you're saying. That makes sense. You are right. I see where you're going with this. But instead just blankly stare at you or listening to everything that you may have to say and then simply saying, okay, someone who has mastered the art of insinuation by always accusing your partner of doing something wrong or being up to no good or being untrustworthy, but never directly saying it. Someone who always has your worst interest in mind, who always thinks that you're up to no good or you must be doing something wrong or you must not be honest. A partner who is skeptical about almost anything you say or do. Someone who is constantly vague or out or acts confused by anything that you may say to them, getting nervous or uncomfortable when someone speaks directly to you in a calm, friendly way by getting on your phone and starting to text, making phone calls on your phone.

Speaker 0 00:20:17 Deprioritizing your partner by talking about how busy you are or how you have a busy workday or making no time or space for your partner because you're so busy. Someone who chooses a random time of day to call their partner on the phone, but then gets upset with them when they d --

-- didn't hear the exact tone that they wanted or they weren't immediately available to give them their undivided attention, immediately evacuating or ejecting from the relationship or the discussion simply because a partner doesn't have all of their attention on you, assuming that all of one gender does one thing, or everyone who's a man or woman is like this or like that. <unk> All men are trash sentiments buying into the delusion that you can do and handle everything by yourself, and you don't need help, and there's no one who needs to come and give you a hand.

Speaker 0 00:21:00 Buying into the delusion, that holding back from your partner or keeping things from them is somehow mysterious. Always assuming the worst case scenario, even if all of the evidence suggests otherwise. Someone who's a downer, someone who's always upset or bothered by something, someone who's always annoyed, someone who finds you annoying all the time. Someone who never notices in retrospect that all of their previous beliefs, feelings, and insinuations that were wrong might inform future behavior and perhaps offer them the ability to be a little more lenient or loving or open-minded or expectant of a better outcome. Someone who never apologizes for things that they accused you of. Someone who always assumes you're up to no good, someone who assumes that any time you are not in their immediate presence or they don't know exactly where you are, that you must be doing something wrong. Never taking ownership of a situation, never taking accountability or responsibility, never being able to apologize, being in a committed, monogamous relationship with someone, but someone who loves to engage in eye movements such as rolling your eyes in the back of your head, sticking your tongue out wildly, showing off your sexual ornamentation for all to see, as well as posturing positions in other body language to give the impression that you want to have sex right now.

Speaker 0 00:22:08 But if someone calls you out on it, you simply retort by using the absolutely infallible argument. It's just social media, someone who gets violently upset if you get upset so that it turns all the attention onto them. Someone who feels attacked anytime you let them know that there's something that bothers you in the relationship. Someone who likes to pull the victim card by saying, I guess I can't do anything right. Why even be with me? I don't know why you're with me if all these things bother you. Changing your mind on how you feel about extremely important subjects for you and your family, such as whether you want kids or not, your political views, human rights issues and thoughts about monogamy on the drop of a dime. And then making your partner wrong for thinking what they think, even though you just changed your mind overnight.

Speaker 0 00:22:48 For example, suggesting that you don't want children and finding a partner who doesn't want children. But then one day waking up and deciding you want children, and then chastising your partner for not wanting children, someone who prioritizes their emotions and how they feel as their exclusive guide to whether they're globally right or wrong, and absolutely insisting that no one in the world could be right if they feel differently about it. Someone who erroneously believes that anything they feel negatively is their intuition talking to them. Someone who insists that a good relationship is all about communication. However, every single time they get upset, the communication goes right out the window. Someone who runs to the other room slams doors, leaves, evacuates, yells, shouts, screams, and pouts someone who may react violently or cruelly or even in a very cold manner, to the very partner who just wants to talk and communicate. Someone who flat out hangs up on you anytime they feel like it when you're on the phone or FaceTime someone who constantly asks destabilizing questions via text message or while they're in the other room without making eye contact with you. Someone who once you go to answer them, is extremely dismissive and condescending, changing the subject to something else, otherwise making it impossible to speak about the very thing that you just asked about.

Speaker 0 00:24:04 Right? So all of that would be option number one, <laugh> to bring you back around. Since that was a 20 minute exploration on one kind of communication, we're asking the question, would you prefer to spend --

-- the rest of your life or be in a relationship with or be married to someone who communicates like that option number one, or would you rather live in this world? Option number two, a world where communication is clear, direct, clean, sincere, concise, loving, upfront, honest, authentic, non-sugar coated, non brutal, healthy, respectful, considerate and caring. A world where if we want or need something, we speak up about it and ask for it directly. A world where if we are hurting, we let the other person know immediately how we're feeling. A world where when someone asks you for something, you actually get a clear, direct answer as opposed to a manipulative game or test a world where if someone feels bad for what they did or knows they did something wrong, they take ownership of it and apologize, and then they actually change their behavior and act accordingly.

Speaker 0 00:25:18 As opposed to just saying, my bad dog, my bad. I own that. And then going right back into the same behavior all over again. Communication where intimately someone asks you what you like and you're able to respond with an honest answer without expecting them to mind to read. So it's obviously a bit of a rhetorical question, but which of these two communication styles do you think would lead you to more happiness, more fulfillment, and a more successful, loving, connected relationship? More understanding for one another, less fights, less arguments. Obviously the choice is number two, no matter who you are, no matter how you were raised, no matter what, you may think about other people in communication, we all need to become a little more vulnerable, a little more clear, honest, direct, upfront, minus letting our emotions completely run us and get the best of us. Can we listen to our partner without trying to spit out our side or without invalidating them or telling them how wrong they are and incorrect they are all the time. Can we take some ownership or responsibility rather than saying, I have no part in this, or I've done nothing wrong, or, yeah, but you did this. Can we be better than acting like whiny, little bratty children?

Speaker 0 00:26:31 Another way to think about how conflicts sneaks its way into our lives is to imagine a couple who's getting along. Absolutely famously, they're spending a day together and everything about this day has gone phenomenally well. They've been intimate, they've been close, maybe they've slept together, they've eaten well. But then out of the blue magically and also seemingly completely unprompted, something will suddenly occur in one partner's brain, a negative thought, something parasitic. It will likely and almost always without fail, take the other partner by surprise. They won't know where it came from. It'll be unexpected and will seem completely unrelated. And sadly, it will likely totally derail the conversation vibe or incredible afternoon that the couple's having together. And what's important to understand here is often this commentary comes out of nowhere. It comes from nothing or better said, it's something that one partner is running in their mind over and over and over and over again, and then they just spring it on you unexpectedly.

Speaker 0 00:27:36 It might be important to the person thinking it if they compare the energy of this beautiful day and how they're getting along, it doesn't make sense to say it, but they can't help themselves. So imagine yourself, you're in a situation where you're in bed together or you're traveling, or you're driving in the car, or you're gazing lovingly in each other's eyes, and then suddenly your partner will say something, think something, or feel something that seems completely disconnected from the moment. And I don't mean from some mean or terrible behavior you did before, or they're still feeling emotional about something that was inappropriate that happened. I mean, things are just generally fine. What this feels like is spontaneous conflict. It comes from nowhere. The vibe, the energy, the mood is all good, but someone allows some poison from their mind to spill out. And it looks like this.

Speaker 0 00:28:27 Your partner may suddenly get very quiet or upset or stonewall you or suddenly become offended or put out so many bad vibes that the whole car or the whole room or the whole situation just feels suddenly uncomfortable. Every one of us knows this feeling. Maybe you've been in a restaurant and you look over at a --

-- nother table and everything just feels tense and terse, even if nothing's happening, usually someone is looking down or in a different direction or just on their phone. Sometimes it could be from something that was said, but it really seems like an exaggerated reaction or they really get bent outta shape to something that was said. Oftentimes, it's quite unintentional if the person is reacting to something you said, you weren't trying to be rude or mean or inconsiderate or even sarcastic or ironic. And then another way something bad can go down is when your partner starts inventing or fabricating something in their head that is not a part of reality, and I do mean objective reality, not subjective reality.

Speaker 0 00:29:24 They may also suddenly decide to be hurt by something or be upset by something that was not said or done or never even happened, or is something from the past. The hardest thing about this kind of conflict is that the partner that this is happening to who's on the receiving end of this kind of negativity, they be trying to have a wonderful day still. And so they've got no clue what's going on or why this is happening. Sadly, it just feels to them like the day took a crap, like everything tanked, and now suddenly they find themselves answering questions or trying to explain themselves or defend themselves about something, and they don't even know why. It's like an inquisition or they're constantly being questioned about something, or something is insinuated. When someone thinks a random thought like this and goes off the deep end, so often they'll just start spiraling, going down a rabbit hole in their own thoughts and inside of their own emotional soup, they're thinking, obsessing, focusing, pondering.

Speaker 0 00:30:20 And the thing is, is that usually this partner is thinking something that may not even have any bearing in reality. It's just completely false, but the secret sauce is that it occurred to them or they felt it, or they feel it inside. So they think it's true, but like all negative thoughts, it hooks them like a parasite or a disease weaving its way through different crevices of their mind and coming out in not very appealing ways. Sadly, sometimes a partner will begin to dwell, obsess, stare out the window, act like something is really wrong, but say nothing is, they'll just amplify negative energy. What are some other signs of this? Their breathing gets more shallow or stops. They begin to hold their breath, even speaking to them becomes difficult or turns into an instant fight. It becomes a whole production. So as mentioned, often the other partner will have no idea what's going on.

Speaker 0 00:31:13 And so we'll say something like, are you okay? What's wrong? What's prompting this? Why are you so upset? Can you calm down? Did I do something? At which point, sadly, you will likely receive some sort of passive aggressive comment, Nope, nothing's wrong. I'm fine. It'll be fine. I'll get over it. I just need to suck it up. Leave me alone. I don't wanna talk about it. There's nothing wrong. So in other words, a display of blatant dishonesty, passive aggressive behavior, horrible communication. They may talk about something else that annoys them, but not the actual thing. And very, very, very, very rarely, if ever, will the person actually say, I'm hurting about this. I'm feeling insecure about this, and I would like to talk about it. Isn't it peculiar that people talk about themselves all day every day, but when it comes to actually being vulnerable or sharing some true aspect about what's going on inside of them, we fumble.

Speaker 0 00:32:13 I mean, heaven forbid, we actually let our partner know what we're actually in pain about. This is where communication comes to a standstill. Can you imagine if instead of your partner picking a fight with you or making you feel really uncomfortable, they just said, Hey, there's something that's been bothering me. I wanna talk to you about it. Or, Hey, I'm really hurting about this or that thing. Could I understand your side? Or could you let me know what you meant by that stuff like this would solve everything. Or imagine if your partner said, you know, I was just sitting here, and then this thought popped in my mind and completely overcame me. Can we explore it? Can you soothe me a little bit? Can you actually help me or make me feel better? It's hard to imagine someone speaking that way, but listen one more --

-- time to how easily conflict can be resolved.

Speaker 0 00:32:57 Baby, I'm hurting right now. I'm feeling insecure about myself, or I'm feeling insecure about my body or our relationship or your relationship with that person because I'm obsessively thinking this disconnected thought. I'm scared that you're gonna leave me or abandon me, or you think I'm terrible or ugly or unattractive, and I think I might be feeling a little insecure about what you said. Can we chat for a few minutes lovingly? Can you hold me right now? Touch me, kiss me. Listen to me. Who would say no to such things if they love their partner and oh my God, to actually hear the truth? Wow, you're saying this and feeling this because you're insecure instead of putting it on me, oh my. If I may be so bold as to share something personal, something I'm dying to hear from a partner is feedback like, you know, T, I know you just said points A, B, and C, but I heard 92, 37 A, B x Y, Z, two r n q to w p.

Speaker 0 00:33:51 And so, uh, I'm wondering if that's true. I'm wondering if you meant what I heard or something that I see comes up a lot for clients. I'd love to hear them say, you know, I know you just said one sentence like that's awesome or that's cool, but I heard that you hate me and you're gonna abandon me and you're gonna move to the south of France. And I'm wondering if we could talk about that. If you blindsides your partner in a negative way with something that you're upset about, it's highly likely that your partner will not only be clueless about what you're upset about, but they may get angry or frustrated as well. And so clear, precise communication about what you're actually feeling on the inside can help you avoid all kinds of conflict. And if you come at some of these problems in a loving way, your partner's going to be 10 times more likely to bend over backwards for you and listen to you, accommodate you, help you and get you through it.

Speaker 0 00:34:43 But if they don't know where you're coming from, they don't know what's going on, they don't know why you're upset. And if something that you're saying is coming completely out of the blue or out of context, your partner probably has no idea what's going on. That is not them playing games or manipulating you or gaslighting you. God forbid they simply don't live inside your head and don't know what the hell you're talking about. So when your partner feels like the rug has been swept out from underneath them or something is coming outta the blue, it's very natural for them to want to get upset or defensive because it seems like it's coming from nowhere.

Speaker 0 00:35:18 It's normal for someone who feels blindsided by negativity or an accusation or an insinuation to be confused, to say things like, I thought everything was fine. I thought we were doing just fine. Why are we suddenly in this argument? Why are we dissecting this? Or insisting on pinpointing accuracy on exactly who said what and who used what verbiage with what punctuation at what moment, who said what and who said when, and who specifically did what fact at what time? Oh, it gets exhausting just thinking about it, which is why you will continuously hear me come back to the simple, simple solution of saying, I'm feeling, Hey, your comment took me off guard. Hey, I was just dwelling on something in my head and wanted to tank the conversation here for a minute. And I think there's humor in that, right? If you can actually admit, listen, I just need to throw some drama in here. Things were going way too well. I kind of wanted to see some negative emotion in you because I thought that would make it feel for me like you care about me.

Speaker 0 00:36:18 Another big point of contention in where conflict arises is because someone believes that their feelings are facts, or just because they feel it, that therefore it's globally true, or because they feel it so strongly, this must be intuition. But often it's not. In a few minutes, we'll dive deeper into it, but just because someone feels something does not make it true. And just because someone's feelings are telling them that there's something wrong does not actually mean that there's something wrong. Ideas like, well, I'm not getting a good feeling about this person right now, so maybe I should never talk to them for the rest of my life. So help me God, something feels a little off about this person, so therefore he or she is instantly cree --

-- py. It feels like there's something amiss here or something off, or that you're not being honest, or you're not telling me the truth, so therefore you must be wrong.

Speaker 0 00:37:06 You must be lying because I feel like you are. I feel like this sounds a little strange to me. This isn't how I would do it, therefore, you're wrong. Oftentimes people are confusing their own real intuition with negative emotion, strange thoughts and feelings, insecurities, and even on occasion, self-hatred, negative emotion or a bad feeling, or feeling funny about something doesn't even mean you should never, ever interact with this person or do this thing. It's my opinion that intuition most of the time comes in a subtle way. It's often gentle, quiet, and usually doesn't hit you like a ton of bricks as usual. There are going to be exceptions to the rule and qualifiers here, right? If you're walking down a dark alley and something in your gut tells you to veer left and run, by all means do it. And maybe you saved your life. But in day-to-day situations, simply feeling uncomfortable, discomfort, upset or annoyed or irritated, or getting a bad feeling does not always mean the worst case scenario.

Speaker 0 00:38:11 Now, the hardest part of all of this is that many people on the planet feel like their feelings need to be validated all the time. In other words, whatever in the world they might be feeling, any emotion, no matter how bizarre or strange or different or off base, or even if it's fundamentally wrong, and especially if you're in a relationship with that person, they usually want you to say, yeah, your feelings are valid. You're allowed to feel this. It's okay that you feel this. I understand that you feel this way, but now I'm the first person to say, pick your battles. If you can be empathetic, understanding, and you wanna provide emotional support to your partner, by all means do it. It's wonderful to have this tool in your tool belt to in fact validate your partner's feelings. I'm so sorry you're feeling this way.

Speaker 0 00:38:57 Yes, you're allowed to feel this way, you're allowed to be upset, but this is not the only way that it should be done. So once again, for some arguments and disagreements, it might be very healthy to say, I see what you mean. I think we have a different opinion about this, but your feelings are valid. Ah, some people love to hear this. However, if someone feels that you did something that you completely did not do or that you thought something that you have never thought or accused you of something that completely, fundamentally, categorically has never happened, there is absolutely no reason to validate your partners or anyone's feelings if they are completely wrong. And I think it doesn't take much to realize that if every one of us went around and no matter who we encountered at a bar, at a coffee shop, at a restaurant, at work, at home with our family, if all we did was run around validating everyone's feelings, you're allowed to feel this.

Speaker 0 00:39:53 I understand. I empathize. It's okay. Yes, you feel this way for everyone's feelings, which for most people often change on a whim, which are never set in stone if we try to validate everyone's feelings around us, anytime they felt discomfort or didn't like something, something that was shown on television, something that someone said, how many times a day can someone get offended, bothered, turned off, and put off infinite amount of times, infinitely upset, infinitely bothered? If we try to make someone feel better anytime they feel uneasy in any situation, we all have to recognize this is just an impossible task. Anyone who's artistic knows that some of our best work, some of our best performances, whether we'd like to admit it or not, have come from pain. Some of our strategies, our businesses, our solutions, the reason we have the products that we have today, that we know and love and use are generally a result of someone being frustrated and upset and hurt and angry by how it was or how the system was or how people were.

Speaker 0 00:40:58 And so they set out to change it by creating something. Now, of course, I don't want you to feel discomfort if it's avoidable. I don't want you to be in writhing or excruciating pain. However, some pain, some discomfort is required for us to grow. Think of the pressure that's put on a diamond. So to tie this into interpersonal relationships, simply because o

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-- ne partner is having a bad feeling or doesn't believe something you say or is having a negative emotional response does not mean that you have to defend yourself tooth and nail. And does not mean that you should feel like you are under pressure or under the gun to prove your innocence if you've done nothing wrong. At the same time, if I'm in relationship with someone and they tell me I'm feeling very sad and hurt right now, man, I wanna know what that's about. Speaker 0 00:41:51 And of course I wanna try to make them feel better. It will usually be followed with something like, well, is it about me? Is there something that I've done wrong? And if they say, yes, I am hurt because I am absolutely. When possible going to stop what I'm doing to see what I can do to help. However, if what they say is, I feel like you're having sex with someone else just to pick something extreme, and this couldn't be farther from the truth for you, and you've already verified that you're not 6 million times, but they keep feeling it at some point, it does not need to fall on the partner to constantly provide the burden of proof that nothing is going on. So I don't mind giving reassurance to a partner who needs it, but I believe that if you are in a situation where you're being accused or things are being insinuated about you that aren't true, or someone is just thinking that you're doing things that you're not, there is no need to give their feelings any airtime.

Speaker 0 00:42:49 I think you can be patient and understanding and loving and say a few times, you know, listen, this is just not true. I'm happy to do anything I can to show it to you, approve it to you, but at some point, we need to drop this, and it can't be 10 more explosions in or 50 more explosions in. You wanna nip it in the bud. So I don't believe in giving airtime to feelings and emotions that are simply unfounded or not valid at all. Now, I know we can get nitty gritty and say, well, isn't everything perspective and what's truth to one person could be a lie to another sometimes, absolutely, but not in many cases of, for example, someone accusing you of being in a physical location where you never were talking to a man or woman that you never spoke to sleeping with, being with, interacting with, or even flirting with someone who you never even saw that day, that week or that month.

Speaker 0 00:43:39 So let's give a real world example. Let's say a partner says to you, I don't think you find me attractive, and you have given them endless compliments, genuine compliments not always the same thing. You ravish them, you kiss them, you adore them, you show it every way you can. You appreciate who they are inside and out. But 17 to 50 times a week, you've got to endure commentary like, I feel like you don't think I'm pretty. I feel like you think I'm ugly. I feel fat. I feel unattractive. I feel like you don't want me or love me anymore. At some point, I don't think it's necessary to continue to give airtime to disempowering statements that are repetitive over time when you've lovingly squashed them, when you've worked through it, heck, maybe you've been to therapy or coaching for it. It just doesn't serve the relationship. So while I do think it's extremely important to validate your partner's feelings from time to time for the important stuff, if someone sounds like a broken record or the same issues are coming up over and over again and there's no place where you could be in more integrity, the other person needs to change negative emotion and feelings about something are not always facts.

Speaker 0 00:44:49 Okay, so now let's talk about the distinction between paranoia and your actual internal guidance system, paranoia and intuition. What does paranoia or catastrophizing, or hallucinating or inventing stories look like? Being stuck in fight or flight, being stricken by fear, insecurity or having lack of self-worth. Not loving yourself, not thinking you're good enough, and therefore, assuming someone would treat you poorly past experiences where people have treated you poorly and so therefore you think you know how all people are and assume your loving partner is gonna treat you this way. Now, there is a huge, enormous, gigantic, categorical fundamental difference between all of that overpowering, overwhelming noise and your real authentic intuition. What is that? Your real intuition in almost all cases, comes as a soft, subtle, gentle guidan --

-- ce, a little whisper, a tiny nudge, a little feeling that says, Hmm, maybe move in this direction, versus simply thinking that someone is lying to you because you trust no one or because your past five boyfriends or girlfriends have lied to you. If your mo for life is to trust no one, you're going to have bad feelings and bad intuition about everyone.

Speaker 0 00:46:11 Oftentimes what people mistake for intuition are simply bad past experiences in life where they've been hurt. You can also get a bad feeling about something, and that may mean that for you, this isn't right or you shouldn't participate in that event or you shouldn't go to that party, but that doesn't mean it's globally wrong or that it's wrong for someone else, or what someone else is feeling or thinking is completely invalidated just because you have a bad feeling and have translated it to be a red flag. Sometimes conflict can even begin inside of a text message where everything is going great and then someone loses it or explodes or reads something the wrong way or completely shuts down. You could even be in a situation where everything is perfect. Once again, it's lively, it's fun. You're going back and forth. You're sending photos. You're talking about how awesome your day is.

Speaker 0 00:47:03 Maybe it's even a little more than you would normally text someone, but then out of the blue, your partner hits you with something weird like, I guess you're gone. I guess you left. I guess you don't care about talking to me anymore. I guess you're no longer interested. I guess I lost you. You seem really distracted. It's obvious to me that you don't wanna talk anymore, so I'm just gonna go, seems like you're not into this conversation. Seems like you're not into this relationship. Seems like you just moved on. Why didn't you answer my last text? Sometimes a client will show me their text thread and say, look how hard I'm trying. Look at how much effort I'm putting in to accommodate my partner. Look at the effort I'm putting in and how it's being met with such negativity and resistance. And then look at the partner's response or reaction one person is trying to fix and solve and come back to a loving place while the other person is only interested in belittling or being right, or arguing or being a stickler for details.

Speaker 0 00:47:58 Sometimes a partner will cherry pick responses just to amplify the negativity in the text, or they'll hand select words or things that you said or moments to make it sound as though you've done something terrible. You won't believe it. But sometimes people even minimize all of the positive attributes and the positive aspects of a relationship because they are so hellbent on the negative. And what's really sad is you can have a hundred positive aspects, but if you have a partner who's wrapped up on one or two negative things, it's almost like the incredible day that you had together, the incredible intimacy or sex or fine dining dinner that you went to. It's like it obliterates that because they're stuck on a sentiment or stuck on a thought once again, like a parasite. Sometimes people would rather be right than to just enjoy the relationship. They get stuck on correcting you or nitpicking a specific phrase or telling you, this isn't what you said.

Speaker 0 00:48:53 This isn't exactly what you said. You said something different five minutes ago. Now you're telling me this. And what they really should be listening for is just what your truth is. What do you mean? What were you intending to say as opposed to just hammering someone with That's not accurate, that's not right, that's not what you said. That's not what you said before. Now you're saying this and there's sort of this constant scrutiny. Friends, you don't need to tolerate this in relationship, especially if you are a man or woman of integrity. It's incredible that you could be very desirous of your partner, really wanna see them spend time with them. And then one text message can send the whole thing down the drain or make you feel reactionary or make you feel like you have to defend yourself. If you realize that you're engaging in psychological warfare with your partner, instead of loving them and appreciating them, or being a supportive partner in the relationship, rather than tanking the conversation, disconnecting, starting an argument or throwing a wrench, rather than making things difficult or making yourself difficult to tal --

-- k to or being done for the night, or rejecting or ignoring or playing games, try simply asking a genuine question via text.

Speaker 0 00:50:01 Hey, babe, is everything okay? Hey, are you still there with me? Hey, what's going on? Everything all right? Or here's my favorite. Ooh, you know, you didn't respond to me in 30 seconds or a minute or five minutes or even 10 minutes, and it's making me feel really insecure or worthless or nervous or uneasy about the relationship because you didn't reply fast enough for my needs. No matter what you may have been doing. Is everything okay? Love? So that the other person has a chance to say, I was in the bathroom, or I got a phone call, or I was working, or I was doing something online, or I was not giving my cell phone my undivided attention. Communication like this allows you to stay connected because you asked for what you wanted and you shared what you needed from a vulnerable perspective. So then when your partner responds, yes, of course everything's okay.

Speaker 0 00:50:53 Why baby? Why am my love? You can say, because I'm feeling insecure, because I'm feeling needy, because I'm feeling this or that. And I know how crazy that may sound to you. Real honesty, God forbid, but the effect it's going to have is going to be so much better than the passive aggressive nonsense that everybody else seems to prefer to pull. The more you hear yourself being vulnerable and talking this way, perhaps the more faith you'll have in your relationship. Another area I wanna throw in here because it feels appropriate is being aware of what you are texting. Are you asking what your partner is up to all the time, where they are, what they're doing, letting them know, oh, I thought you said you were doing this, but now you're doing that. I thought you said this is what you wanted and now you're changing your mind.

Speaker 0 00:51:40 Are you always trying to keep tabs or point out or show them where they're wrong or look for problems in the relationship? If so, you're doing more damage than good because that kind of communication is only going to come off as controlling. And very rarely are people ever going to be able to give you the answer that you're looking for without it feeling militant, like, yes, ma'am, yes sir. I'm over here now. I'm going there. Here's my entire schedule. But now imagine being able to be playful with some of this stuff. Imagine you call your partner and say, I'm feeling really insecure because you didn't respond to me. And the other partner can say, oh, again, oh, for the 50th time in a sweet, playful way, yes, baby, I'm right here. Everything's okay. And then you can start thinking to yourself, man, I am really uneasy about this. I don't trust my partner. I do feel insecure about this. And you can work on yourself instead of expecting the world to change or expecting your partner to change simply because you feel uncomfortable or, and I know I'm really pushing for some uncharted territory here. How about a real live, genuine phone call?

Speaker 0 00:52:53 Hey, I just got a funny feeling inside where I didn't hear from you after two to 10 minutes, and I started to feel really insecure. So I picked up the phone to just get some validation from you. Could I get a little bit of reassurance or could you give me some compliments or let me know that you want to be in this relationship? Hey, when you texted me the two words, that's interesting. Were you trying to be rude, snide, coy, and inconsiderate, because that's how I took it. And I'm sure you didn't mean to, but I would love to hear some reassurance when you're vulnerable this way. I could almost guarantee that your partner will say, oh my gosh, of course not. No, I didn't mean anything by that. I just meant to say blah, blah, blah. And you can squash it. And herein lies the magic of all of this. You realize that your trite, irrelevant BS fight is exactly that. Nothing, a lot to do about nothing that does not need to get amplified out of control. There's no problem. You squash the argument right then and there. You nip it in the bud. You prevent it from even happening, all from making one phone call, confessing your insecurity and being honest.

Speaker 0 00:53:58 Sometimes we are with partners where the same thing happens over and over and over again, and there isn't a drug problem or an alcohol problem or a lying problem or a manipulation problem. It just keeps happening. It's as t --

-- hough they can't help themselves. It's fine to point out a pattern and say, look, it seems like something is always going wrong. You say this, then I say that, then you react this way. Then I react that way and down we go. But someone can stop it. And I'm really a big proponent of inviting your partner to reflect within themselves. Not always, not to always turn it on them and say, this is a you thing. It's never me. I've done nothing wrong. But in select instances where it's very clear that they're just repeating the same pattern over and over again, that you say, listen, I'm not engaging here.

Speaker 0 00:54:44 I'm done. I'm done with this conversation. You go reflect on it. And when you're ready to be the loving, wonderful partner that I know you can be, I'll be over here waiting for you. Sometimes we find ourselves in relationships where we're together for months or years or even decades, and we have demonstrated our trust and our stability and our honesty repeatedly. Where we've been there for our partner, we've shown up for them. Maybe we go out of our way to accommodate and prioritize them. But sometimes in these relationships, and many of you will know somehow still there isn't trust or there's doubt or you can just feel they don't believe the words that you're saying. So how does this look when these types of problems have been infesting a relationship for a very long time? Some people will point blank, make accusations and say something like, oh, I know you're probably doing this or out doing that.

Speaker 0 00:55:36 I know you spoke to this person or slept with that person. Others have a little bit more of a sneaky way of doing it. It usually comes as an insinuation or a little bit more passive aggressively, an inference, an implication or a vague accusation. Someone might say, oh, I thought you got rid of this. I thought you weren't talking to that person anymore. I didn't know you went over there. Still looks like you stayed up really late last night. Usually followed by some very cold and distant behavior or, hmm, I see you haven't replied for hours. Swell thanks, followed by cold, quiet, or distant behavior. Sometimes a partner will be extremely passive aggressive by making snide underhanded comments like hope you had fun with him when you were by yourself last night. I know you were out with this person. Looks like you had a good night together when you were at home alone.

Speaker 0 00:56:25 Oh, I can totally tell this person is still into you and you're not over them yet seeming like they want you to defend yourself or making wild hair-brained accusations. But then when you actually defend yourself or show proof or give photographic or video evidence, oddly, when you do, some partners will go so far as to say, I don't care. I don't wanna look, I don't wanna see. It doesn't matter. They may shun you. They refuse to look at you. They may clam up. They don't wanna argue. They'll say they don't want to get into it with you right now, or I'm not gonna go there with you right now. Even though going there is exactly the thing that they just provoked. Oh my goodness, this is so important. So often people will throw a wrench or provoke a situation, and then when it becomes a discussion, it's, I don't wanna argue, we're not gonna talk about this.

Speaker 0 00:57:11 You're digging up the past and I'm over it. <laugh> to add insult to injury, this can often be followed by even more passive aggressive behaviors, such as a text that may read. Have a nice day. Now, here's the kicker. Everyone can be patient for a while. I myself can be patient for about 30 to 40 incorrect assumptions and accusations, maybe even more. But no one can respond to an implication, an accusation or an insinuation indefinitely in a favorable, calm, patient, collected way. And I think, you know, when you see people out in public and they're bickering, you don't know how many times someone has put up with something or how many times they're repeating themselves, or how many times this issue is coming up over and over and over again. And you know, it continues to shock me. Even though I understand that billions of people expect their partner to read their mind, I still cannot believe that people are so afraid to ask for what they need to specifically and directly say, I need this.

Speaker 0 00:58:16 Instead of expecting your partner to know it and then being disappointed when they don't. And then mak --

-- ing it mean something like they don't love you or they don't care, or they've been lying to you just because they don't do it your way or the way you were raised. And I'm even more blown away when someone will snap back with, I shouldn't have to ask. I shouldn't have to tell you. You just should know these things about me. And listen, if you're with a good person who wants to do things with you, yes, you need to repeat yourself. Yes, you need to ask sometimes. Then of course, some of the greatest hits, if you have to ask, we have a problem and we're done. If you don't know the answer, it's over. If I have to tell you, then it doesn't matter. Oftentimes, the person on the receiving end is not clueless, not simple, not dumb, not the more basic of the two species, not unintelligent and not an idiot, but simply put, they have no idea what's going on in your head or what your expectation is.

Speaker 0 00:59:15 Now, I wanna sidebar here for a moment because I know many of you have got caught up, especially if you're a good person, you've got nothing to hide and you're feeling under attack or maybe like you're in trouble or accused of doing something wrong that you didn't. It may seem like the natural and logical thing to do is to defend yourself, especially if you've been accused of the same thing 5, 10, 15, 20 times. And in many cases in partnerships, even defending yourself somehow gets you more into the hole than you thought before. Let's take something. Everyone will be familiar with the idea or fear that your partner may be cheating or unfaithful or the fear that they may have eyes on someone else or be doing something shady or be up to no good. And the sad thing about this is that once we're triggered, most of us either see red or see black, or do not see the world through rose colored glasses anymore.

Speaker 0 01:00:07 Everything becomes possible evidence to build your case against your partner. So if you ask your partner, uh, were you with someone last night sexually? And they say, my goodness, no, I was in bed sleeping. I was not out, I was asleep. But then you hit them with something like, Hmm, interesting or cool story or sure anyway, have a great day, or dead silence. The person being accused is then going to very likely be annoyed or irritated because not only did they answer the question truthfully, but now their partner is still implying that they're lying or believing that there's something going on that you're not telling them. So if you feel prompted to then defend yourself, and I don't know, say you took a couple photos of your night, like while you were watching TV or of your pet, your dog, your cat, whatever it is, and you send it and say, look, look at the timestamp, <laugh>, look at the evidence.

Speaker 0 01:01:06 Here it is that I wasn't doing this or that. Often a partner will say, anything you say is bs. I don't buy it. That's not true. This could be a doctored photo. I see a flaw here and there. It's like you're on the witness stand feeling like all of your actions are under scrutiny, is never fun and is never going to build trust. And so friends, there are a couple things to note here. It's very easy to get caught up in the path of defending yourself, proving yourself, trying to show your partner that you're not wrong, trying to help them be less upset, noticing that they're upset all the time. Well, first of all, friends, you don't always have to defend yourself. You can flip it on them. You can stand in your truth. You can let them know, look, I've answered and I have nothing else to say.

Speaker 0 01:01:51 Number two, even if you ask a really calm, rational question and you handle it very professionally and appropriately by saying, is there something you'd like to ask me? Is there something you maybe would like to know? What are you insinuating with these comments? What are you asking me here when someone else is feeling negative emotion? Even a very direct, clear line of questioning like this is often met with a, Nope, I don't wanna talk about it. I've got nothing to say. Do you have something to tell me? And so on and so forth. Some people will even think that you have something to hide by inviting your partner to ask you a question if they think something is wrong.

Speaker 0 01:02:29 So I think sadly, what we come to realize is with some people, there's just no way to get around bad or poor communication. There's no way to shift someone's perspecti --

-- ve into believing you or trusting you or having faith if they're hellbent on not doing it. And what we're talking about here is getting someone out of a really bad state or using disempowering vocabulary, disempowering beliefs, or purposely allowing themselves to get stuck in a place that they can't get out of. So either you just have to let it be, let the whole thing breathe. Give them some space. In some cases, you may need to get out of that interaction and just leave and let them know, Hey, I'm gonna let this cool off. And in some cases, you may need to evaluate if you need to leave your relationship or you may need to get some professional or psychological help.

Speaker 0 01:03:18 Maybe something's missing. Maybe someone needs a diagnosis of sorts and understanding what perhaps a very real mental health issue might be. You can be a lot more understanding to someone's condition or situation or empathetic towards them, but otherwise you've got to come back to it when they're in a different state of mind. Because when your partner is seeing red, when they're angry or hurt, or are hallucinating, wild ideas that are far, far, far from the truth, maybe even making up stories in their head about things that you're not doing, there's not a whole lot in the world that you can do about it. Just like that very familiar feeling that we all know all too well when we're expecting someone to come home or call and they haven't. Or they come home super late or you haven't heard from them in an hour or two or 10, and we panic, we worry.

Speaker 0 01:04:07 We think something terrible happened. We go through all these stories in our head, we assume the worst, think the worst, and we think, gosh, if they haven't passed away, then they must be cheating on us with five different people. It feels like nothing in the moment can actually turn you around until the call comes in, until the person shows up and it's like, yeah, it was fine. It was a dead battery, or this happened and that happened. And it's always some excuse, right? But then once you actually realize they're fine, everything is okay, sometimes you need to take a little space, let your brain calm down and reconfigure.

Speaker 0 01:04:44 Another perspective I really like for handling conflict is to simply think, where are you focusing right now? What side of the fence are you on? Are you being positive or negative? Are you focusing on the small amounts of garbage in your relationship or are you focusing on what's working? Are you stuck in doubt or hope, despair or hopefulness? Do you trust your partner or do you not? And if you don't, do you need to get out of this relationship or marriage or are there steps you can take to work on it? But if you're just being a big pain in the ass or you just think you're being snarky or funny or cracking a joke all the time, or sarcasm is your second language, maybe you can just stop and knock it off or try focusing on giving your partner the benefit of the doubt.

Speaker 0 01:05:29 Assuming and believing and insinuating that they didn't hurt you or didn't lie to you or didn't do this on purpose to make you feel bad at some point, you have to make a choice in your relationship. Am I in or out? If I'm in, do I believe them or not? You gotta believe them. If you're gonna stay in something, then there has to be trust, honesty, open communication. And if you can't get yourself to believe your partner, trust your partner, invest in them. This does not mean it's a red flag or that the person is in fact lying to you. Although I know there have been so many cases lately all over the internet where someone never knew that their person was in fact lying to them. But from time to time, there does need to be another voice of reason. Yes, some people are very bad and crooked.

Speaker 0 01:06:12 Yes, some people lie just to lie, but it's not always the case. And by the way, even if you think you catch them in something now or years down the road, it does not immediately mean, aha, my intuition was right all along. I knew this person was dishonest. They must have lied to me here and here and here. We make such big stories in our head. True intuition will always serve you. But paranoia, fear, insecurity, nervousness, bad boy, relationships in the past and bad exes can always taint your emotions. Everything colors and shapes your stomach turning sour or your nervousness or your weird feelings or senses that you may ha --

-- ve. And it sometimes can just be completely wrong.

Speaker 0 01:07:00 If a partner tells me, I'm feeling really insecure, can you soothe me? I'm the first person to try to drop everything and say, absolutely. Do you need some delicious snacks? Do you need a warm blanket or a weighted blanket? Do you want me to lay on you or look in your eyes? Do you need to be listened to? Do you want me to just look at you or spend time with you? What will give you that relief? And to me, that's a very healthy partnership. Sometimes despite your best efforts and your positive reinforcement and your winning attitude, you may discover that you just have a partner who's stormy, for lack of a better phrase. Sometimes they won't let things get back to a nice place or they keep them in a negative state and they say, no, I don't know, or I don't know how to tell you, or I won't tell you, I don't want that.

Speaker 0 01:07:47 I don't need that. I don't care. I'll be fine. I'll get over it. Leave me alone. Don't talk to me, don't touch me. Sometimes it can feel really hostile. You gotta be careful here because this can spiral off into making you act like a puppy dog. Well, how about this? Can I bring you some food? Can I rub your shoulders? Can I help you out? Can I listen to you? And each time the person's like, no, no, I don't want that. I don't need that. I don't need any of your help. But they're so clearly upset, and so it's almost like they're biting the hand that feeds them. What can I do to soothe you and help you right now, baby? You might say nothing. When you're dealing with someone like this, sometimes you have to realize that maybe you've done your best. Maybe there isn't more that you can do right now. And you need to either leave the situation, be or move on with your day, night, or life. You can back up or give space. And you need to evaluate if you can deal with someone who's probably going to be like this or worse for the rest of their life.

Speaker 0 01:08:45 It's natural to get defensive if you've told your partner the same answer over and over again over days, weeks, and months, and your answer hasn't changed, but they refuse to believe it. If you poke a wild bear enough times with a stick, you're gonna get a reaction. Someone's gonna have you for lunch. And this is the same thing with humans. Friends, listen to this. You cannot expect to provoke and push and push and hammer on and regurgitate and bother your partner about the same things over and over and over and over and over and over again. You cannot do whatever you want, behave however you want, act however you want, say whatever you want, and then just expect your partner to tolerate or be supportive of very, very bad behavior. There's going to be a reaction and that reaction is appropriate. And so when it turns loud or gets ugly, or name calling gets involved, or you say things that you don't mean to one another, sometimes the accusing partner will actually double down and think, aha, your reaction, you being upset is now proof that I'm right because you're getting mad and you're getting defensive.

Speaker 0 01:09:46 How many of you have had that happen? Someone pushes you and pushes you and pushes you, you explode, or you have a bad reaction, or you say something you don't mean. And they think I knew it. I knew it, because if you didn't do it, you would just be calm and peaceful. But what's at play here is you've got a partner who's been provoking you a little too much, so you're having a very natural reaction.

Speaker 0 01:10:07 Sometimes you will come across a partner who thinks that no matter what they say to you, no matter what they do to you, no matter how they come across or no matter what their bad behavior is, that you should be infinitely patient with them no matter how many times they screw up. No matter how many times they keep making a bad mistake, no matter how many times they keep repeating a pattern from you, they expect you to never yell, never be mean, never name call, never be cruel, never have a bad reaction to just be forgiving and patient. Well, this is a tough if not impossible, ask for anybody to accommodate. For most people, it's going to be very difficult to communicate their emotions calmly and cleanly for the hundred and 50th time. So if sometimes you find that your voice escalates a little bit or you get upset or you get a little more intense, these are normal reactions or normal emotions, you d --

-- on't have to be minimized or put in a corner or be told to keep quiet or shut up because you're actually feeling your emotions now, especially when you're dealing with a repeated subject, almost like having the same thorn being stuck in your side again and again and again.

Speaker 0 01:11:21 But you know, by the way, stay calm, be cool, don't have any kind of a reaction. Just stay calm, be cool, and just love adore and appreciate me. No, Lola, no one can be endlessly virtuous when someone continues to poke or when you've used communication like, Hey, please stop doing this. Hey, this is a bad pattern. We've already been through this. I've answered this. We've gone here before.

Speaker 0 01:11:46 Sometimes your partner will feel like they are an armchair psychologist and begin to diagnose your bad reactions to their bad behavior because now they think they're seeing the signs, the telltale signs of your fill in the blank, narcissism, psychopathy, et cetera. Oh, you took a pause here to answer my question. You're lying to me. Oh, you're getting really defensive. You must not be telling the truth. Oh, this is textbook. So I come back to this idea that no matter which side of the relationship you're on, where is your focus? Are you focusing on what's working? Are you focusing on embellishing and talking about the wonderful times that you can have together, exploring, connecting? Or are you worried about this one thing that happened or this one thing that was said, or a technicality or detail that maybe you can just let go of things like, you know, I know you made five different points, but I'm gonna just poke a hole in one point to invalidate your whole argument.

Speaker 0 01:12:40 You've gotta look at where you're focusing, and sometimes you just have to let it go. Surrender, take a breath, give to love. Remember, you're on the same team. Not necessarily let go of the relationship, but both people just need to woosah. Don't we love each other? Are we still attracted to each other? Don't we want the best for each other? Do we want this to work? Are we in this? Do we enjoy each other's company? Do we love each other? Then focus on it. What are we arguing about anyway? Why are we upset here? Can we come back to this? Can one of us be more conscious and get the other back on the right track? For me, a really healthy relationship does not look like someone else always saving the day, or one partner always coming to the rescue or conceding or giving in.

Speaker 0 01:13:28 And it certainly doesn't look like someone being upset all of the time, especially multiple times a week and multiple times a day with the same partner. It doesn't look like always feeling doubt, insecurity, uncertainty, or worry. But it's more about when both people are invested in each other and you take steps to make that so you give each other the benefit of the doubt. You give each other love and reassurance when appropriate. You ask for help and reassurance and clarification when you need it. And let me reiterate here, yes, you ask questions if you're unsure or you need something from your partner or they're not giving you something, you can ask for it. And it's okay if you're feeling angry, sad, mad, upset, try leading with a question or a statement first. I'm feeling hurt by this. Is this true? Did you mean to say this?

Speaker 0 01:14:18 Here's what I thought. Did you mean to do this instead of you? You, you, you. Simple stuff. And I just don't see people using this skill very often in most arguments, fights and disagreements. There's nothing actually wrong or there's a perceived fear or insecurity about being abandoned or being lied to, or being manipulated or being made to look stupid or something underneath that may not even be happening in your reality. And I know there are exceptions to the rule. I know there are plenty of people out there who lie, manipulate, connive, do anything to get their way. And I know most people would sooner throw someone under the bus than take responsibility for being wrong about something. But it's really important to be able to distinguish the garbage, the nonsense, the bickering, the stuff that you go back and forth on that just doesn't matter. And what a waste of life. We have these incredible minds and bodies that we could do so much with them. And here we are going nitpicking and nitpicking and nitpicking. Gross. What's the alternative? Breathing space. Benefit of the dou --

-- bt, respect, connection, a hug, a snuggle, a kiss, some closeness, intimacy, compassion, tenderness. This is where you wanna put your focus and attention. It is so much nicer to have the courage and vulnerability to ask the questions we need to ask with vulnerability and love. Speaker 0 01:15:44 Thank you for listening. I hope you've enjoyed this episode immensely. It's been something that's been in progress for the better part of four years, so I'm very happy to be releasing part one. If what I say resonated with you and you wanna learn more about sex, intimacy, and relationships, please enjoy the other episodes. This one was a little bit different, but in other episodes it's much more detail oriented for how to be intimate, how to be sexual, how to be sensual. You can listen to The Closeness podcast everywhere, Spotify, YouTube, music, YouTube, apple, deser, iHeart, and in your Tesla. To join me for a session, please visit [crave closeness.com](http://cravecloseness.com) or get started by filling out an intake form at [crave closeness.com/intake](http://cravecloseness.com/intake). Thanks again for listening, and have a great day.

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