

GROUP #8
EQUALITY AND NON-VIOLENCE DYNAMICS

Building a Better Relationship:

Discussion: What is your idea of equality in a relationship?

Is there anything that you can do to better your relationship and make your partner feel as if she were more of an equal partner?

Below is a list of things to help you build a better relationship: (Duluth: 1995)

1. **Non-Threatening Behavior:** never raising your voice; Speaking and acting in a manner that makes your partner feel safe in being able to express himself/herself.
2. **Respect:** listening in a non-judgmental manner and being emotionally understanding with your partner, valuing your partner's opinions even if it differs from your own.
3. **Giving Trust and Support:** letting your partner know that you respect her goals; respecting your partner's right to be a separate individual with her own friends activities and opinions.
4. **Honesty and Accountability:** accepting responsibility for yourself and your actions; acknowledging your past mistakes no matter how embarrassed you may feel about them (i.e. violence); having the maturity to admit when you have been wrong; communicating openly and truthfully.
5. **Responsible Parenting:** sharing parental responsibilities; being a positive, non-violent role model for your children.
6. **Shared Responsibility:** to mutually agree upon a fair distribution of work; making important family decisions together.
7. **Economic Equality:** making financial decisions together; making sure that both partners benefit from financial arrangements.
8. **Negotiations and Fairness:** always seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflicts; being able to accept change; being willing to compromise.

Example: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Give an example of a way that you could have used non-threatening behavior in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
2. Give an example of a way that you could have shown your partner more respect in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
3. Give an example of a way that you could have shown or given more trust or support in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
4. Give an example of a way that you could have been more honest or accountable for your actions in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
5. Give an example of a way that you could have been a more responsible parent in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?

6. Give an example of a way that you could have shared or taken more responsibility in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
7. Give an example of a way that you could have been more economically respectful in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?
8. Give an example of a way that you could have negotiated or been more fair in a past situation and how you feel it may have resulted in a different outcome?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 9
UNDERSTANDING JEALOUSY

Discussion: What do you think jealousy is?

What is Jealousy?

Jealousy is hard to define. No single definition can actually give justice to its purely emotional power. As jealousy pertains to domestic violence, it is a deep fear that your partner will give away something else that he is supposed to share only with you. This can be time, attention, closeness, sex, etc.

Discussion: An interesting fact is that while the birth of a child often brings a couple closer together, it can also tear them apart. Why do you think that in some cases this happens?

Types of Jealousy:

Let's remember that jealousy is a feeling (like anger). Therefore it can also escalate (like anger). There are three different levels of jealousy. They are:

1. Low Level Jealousy: This is often not expressed or even realized.
2. Middle Level Jealousy: This is when a person starts getting those irrational pictures in his head.
3. High Level Jealousy: This is when a person reacts without clearly thinking of the consequences and often without all of the information. This is usually followed by regret or defensive behavior.

Example: A man called his wife to let her know that he was on his way home from work. When his wife didn't answer the phone he began to wonder where she was because at this time she was always home. Later that evening she told her husband that she was over her mother's house visiting. However, he knew that this wasn't true because he called over there earlier and her mother said that she wasn't there. The man then started picturing his wife in bed with an ex-boyfriend. This mental picture in his head started growing and growing and before long he slapped his wife. The next morning was his birthday and he discovered that she didn't tell him where she was because she was out buying a gift for him and it was a surprise. After he found this out he apologized and felt terrible.

Incident: My wife was not home when I called her and hid the truth about where she was.

Fantasy: I thought that she was out with an ex-boyfriend.

Jealous behavior: He slapped her.

Exercise: Answer the following question in the space provided.

1. Have you ever experienced jealousy in a past relationship?

2. Have you ever blown things way out of proportion in your mind with irrational mental pictures and then escalated in some violent way that has made you regret what you had done?

3. Name the incident.
4. Name the fantasy.
5. Name the jealous behavior.

Discussion: Now lets each share a story where our jealousy got out of control and we regretted it afterwards.

Further Discussion: What kinds of things make you feel jealous?

Do you repeatedly have particular jealous fantasies about your partner?

When you do feel yourself getting jealous do you have any physical or behavioral early warning signs?

Why We Are Vulnerable To Jealousy:

It is now believed that some people are more likely to become jealous than others because of early experiences in life. The two types of people who are particularly vulnerable are those who have low self-esteem and those who have felt specific losses early in life.

We all grow up with some type of negative emotions about ourselves from people whom we care about. However, some of us get them so consistently that we begin to believe them. It can make us feel worthless and as though we don't deserve good things. Often those bad feelings and insecurities are covered up by acting tough, exaggerating our self-importance (lying about how great we are) or by passive agreement.

When a person feels bad about himself/herself, he tries to regain self-worth by trying to be seen as a person who is worthy. Often the person is incapable of actually feeling good unless another person is appreciating them. This person, therefore, becomes dependent on another person for what they can't provide for himself / herself. This dependence can make one vulnerable to jealousy. While, on the other hand, this person wants to be seen as great, he is always worried that his partner will find out that he isn't. When, and if, the partner holds back her admiration, the person has no positive self-esteem to fall back on. When the partner smiles at another person at a party those jealous fears and insecurities are released. He may think that the other person is better looking than he is. He may think that he isn't good enough. He may feel as if he is going to loose his partner. When the jealous reaction occurs, the partner may very well leave him.

When a person has experienced a loss early in his life, through death or divorce, a similar process can occur. This also can happen if a child grows up in an abusive or alcoholic family because often the children are abandoned by their parent(s) because of their own conflicts or due to alcoholism, a disease itself. Often as the person reaches adulthood he tries to control his partner so that he is not abandoned as he was as a child.

Discussion: Are you a person who without realizing it until now may be susceptible to jealous fears by feelings of insecurity or loss?

Do you give your partner control over whether you feel good about yourself?

Jealousy and Boundaries:

Jealousy is often an issue of power and control. When we try to exercise responsibility for another person's actions, ideas and inner feelings, there is often trouble. This is because we are extending our personal boundaries and it actually is the result of our own dependency on them. If our emotions involve another, then trying to control that other person is how we feel safe. Therefore, if our partner leaves us we are vulnerable to deep feelings of loss and abandonment. This is because we feel as if part of ourselves have been taken away. It is important that we talk to our partners, friends, therapists or psychologists so that we understand what are safe and clear boundaries.

Discussion: Have any of you felt, without realizing it until now, that you have intruded on another person's boundaries?

Learning to Control Jealousy:

If you find yourself feeling jealous, the best way to handle it is by recognizing it and directly expressing it to yourself and your partner. This helps to open honest lines of communication and creates a non-violent solution.

If your partner chooses to do something different, like getting a new job or going back to school, it is important that you understand that he is not abandoning you. He is merely bettering or developing himself. If this stirs up fears, then express them calmly. Don't forget this is two fold. If you expect your partner to be open, honest and trusting with you, then you must be so with him. Also, try to avoid situations that will make you jealous if at all possible. If you can't do this, then try to rehearse ahead of time that you are in control of yourself and no one else is in control of your emotions or actions. If you find yourself getting jealous, ask yourself, "Is this jealousy realistic?" Don't forget, when you act jealously, you usually will regret it later on. Therefore, take a time-out and discuss it when you and your partner are alone and both are calm. Remember, once you explode you can't take it or the consequences of it back.

Exercise: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. What are your jealousies in your current relationship?
2. How do you express your jealousy?
3. What makes you vulnerable to jealousy?
4. How do you use your jealousy to control your partner?
5. What would happen if you stopped controlling your partner?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 10
Assertiveness, Nonassertiveness and
Aggressiveness: Part One

Defined:

Before we continue it is first important to understand the difference between assertiveness, non assertiveness and aggressiveness. For the next two weeks we will be discussing assertive behavior. Assertiveness is an attempt to communicate clearly and directly to someone your needs, thoughts and feelings. Nonassertive behavior is not communicating your needs, thoughts or feelings. Aggressive behavior, on the other hand, is not caring about other people's rights. It is dominating, defensive, hostile and can even be humiliating. While it may seem similar to assertiveness, the difference is that it is at the expense of others.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

In chapter four we discussed three different ways that a person can handle anger or communicate; directing it, stuffing it or escalating it. Assertiveness is the same as directing it. Nonassertiveness is the same as stuffing it. Aggressiveness is the same as escalating it.

It is believed that aggressive and nonassertive behaviors are two primary reasons that people become violent. It is easy to see how this can happen. Often people who become aggressive or let their non assertiveness lead to aggression wind up feeling guilty, having lowered self esteem, lack self confidence and feel badly about their relationships. On the other hand, people who assert themselves usually feel good about themselves and their relationships.

Discussion: This is often the place where group members will ask, "What about an aggressive salesman? After all don't salesmen have to be aggressive?" This is a good question. How many of you would feel good after being intimidated into buying a car? Would you continue to do business with someone who bullied you or made you feel stupid in front of your partner? Actually the phrase should be assertive salesman. Aggressive salesmen don't last, assertive ones do.

Another primary difference between aggressiveness and assertiveness is that aggressiveness winds up being a Win-Lose situation while assertiveness winds up being a Win-Win situation. When a person is aggressive with another person he may get what he wants but it is at the expense of another.

Example #1: "Give me that pencil!" (and he takes it!)

In example #1 the second person was bullied and humiliated. This is an example of a Win-Lose situation.

When a person is assertive he may or may not get what he wants but no one loses.

Example # 2: "May I borrow your pencil?"

"Sure".

Example #3: "May I borrow your pencil?"

"I'm using it right now but when I am done you can borrow it".

In examples #2 and #3 no one has been humiliated or made to feel bad. In example #3 the second person was also being assertive by saying "not right now," but again he did not humiliate the first person and was willing to give it to him when he was finished. Therefore, this is an example of a Win-Win situation.

Discussion: Do you understand the difference between Win-Win and Win-Lose?

Like recognizing your anger and learning to take time-outs, assertiveness takes time to learn. Drastic changes don't take place over night. Changes do happen over time and people will come to respect you more and fear you less.

Asking for What You Want:

In an intimate relationship two of the hardest things to do are to ask directly for what you want and to refuse requests. Many of the people currently enrolled in Anger Management Education or Domestic Violence Groups do not know how to ask for what they want, in stead they demand and order in a hostile manner or assume that their partner or co-worker should know and then they explode when it doesn't happen. It is because they feel that they may get hurt by asking. However, the most direct way of getting what you want is to simply ask for it.

Discussion: Do any of you do this?

On the other hand, your partner or co-worker may ask you to do something for them. If it is something that you don't want to do, you can either do it and feel badly or learn to simply say no. Many people stuff it when they really want to say no. This just leads to the inevitable escalation and the explosion.

There are numerous advantages in learning to ask for what you want. The most obvious one is that eventually you will increase the chances of getting what you want out of life. This is no guarantee. Don't forget the other person also has the right to say no. However the odds are greater that you will get what you want by asking for it assertively and directly than by expecting

Exercise: Put two chairs facing each other. You sit in one and imagine your partner sitting in another. Now imagine making the following requests out loud to your partner and see how it feels to ask. Try to notice which areas you feel more or less comfortable with. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being easy, 5 being difficult) rate the difficulty of each request.

- _____ 1. I would like to borrow five dollars from you.
- _____ 2. Would you be willing to help me clean the garage today?
- _____ 3. I would like to be alone today.
- _____ 4. I would like to have sex with you.
- _____ 5. I would like to borrow one hundred dollars.
- _____ 6. Will you hold me? I'm feeling scared.
- _____ 7. Will you sleep close to me tonight?
- _____ 8. I would like to sleep alone tonight.
- _____ 9. I would like a date with you on Friday.

- _____ 10. I would like to talk quietly.
- _____ 11. Will you kiss me?
- _____ 12. I would like to know why you are angry with me.
- _____ 13. Will you watch the kids today?
- _____ 14. How are you feeling today?
- _____ 15. I am busy reading the paper. Can we talk later?
- _____ 16. I would like to take a time-out.

Exercise: Once you discover with whom you have the easiest time being assertive, then you can begin to practice asking what you want from him first. Gradually work your way up to those with whom you have the most difficulty. Below is a list of people with whom you may or may not have contact. Try to imagine that you are directly asking each one of them for something that you want. In the blank space indicate whether or not you find it easy, uncomfortable or difficult.

- _____ Mother
- _____ Father
- _____ Partner
- _____ Boss
- _____ Religious Figure (Priest, Rabbi, etc.)
- _____ Friend
- _____ Child
- _____ Police Officer
- _____ Therapist
- _____ Doctor
- _____ Phone Survey Operator ("Hi I'm calling from ...")
- _____ Door to Door Salesman
- _____ An Employee

The more you begin to ask for what you want from people the easier it will get. Remember to be assertive and direct. You may not get everything that you request, but you will be glad that at least you tried. You also will find that if done properly, people will have more respect for you.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 11
Assertiveness, Nonassertiveness and
Aggressiveness: part two

Saying No:

It is very important that we learn how to assertively say no to things that we don't want to do. If we don't, we will find ourselves being resentful of ourselves and others. Many people with anger problems find that they stuff it when they want to say no. However, they eventually escalate.

On the other hand, many of those with anger problems may escalate the situation by becoming judgmental or belligerent right from the start. They accuse others of "always" asking for things.

Discussion: Do any of you say that you will do something even if you know that you would rather not?

Wouldn't it just be easier to say, "No?"

When was the last time that you said "no" to someone?

Is it possible that you refuse requests in indirect ways?

When was the last time you wanted to stay at home but someone wanted you to go out with them? If you are like most people either you went or you made up an excuse in order to get out of going. Can you remember the last time that you wanted to leave a friend's party? Instead of being assertive you said "I'm sorry I have to get up early tomorrow."

Exercise: Below is a list of reasons why many of us find it so very difficult to say "no." Can you name three more?.

When I was a child my parents would hit me if I said "no!"

People might not like me if I said "no!"

If I said "no" I might hurt someone else's feelings!

People might think I was rude if I said "no" and reject me!

If I said "no" people might think I'm not a nice person!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

"I Won't" vs. "I Can't":

Often people will use the expression "I can't" when they really mean "I won't." Obviously there is a difference. When a person says, "I won't," she is indicating that she is making a choice. When a person says, "I can't," she is indicating that some force is preventing her. If a person continuously says, "I can't," eventually she will come to believe that she cannot control what happens to her and she will become a victim herself.

There are times when a person is really unable to do something and the phrase, "I can't" is acceptable. However, more times than not we use the phrase, "I can't" in order to save face when we really mean "I won't" or "I don't want to."

If you say "no" to someone it is bound to happen that they ask you "why." It is important to be aware of this possibility. The reason is that if you are persistently asked

"why" you may find yourself beginning to escalate. If this does happen you have many choices regarding what you can do. First of all you don't owe anyone an explanation, if you don't feel that it is necessary. On the other hand, you may feel that you want to explain. The choice is up to you.

Exercise: Two volunteers read below.

Partner #1: Will you go out with me tonight?

Partner #2: No, I don't want to.

Partner #1: Why?

Partner #2: I just don't want to.

or

I'm tired and I don't want to go.

or

I'm tired right now, but I'd like to go out later.

If the other person is endlessly persisting then take a time out. Learning to say "no" takes a lot of practice so be patient with yourself.

Exercise: Once you discover with whom you have the easiest time being assertive, then you can begin to practice saying "no" to them and gradually work your way up to those with whom you have the most difficulty. Below is a list of people with whom you may or may not have contact. Try to imagine that you are directly saying "no" to each one of them. In the blank space indicate whether or not you find it easy, uncomfortable or difficult.

- _____ Mother
- _____ Father
- _____ Partner
- _____ Boss
- _____ Religious Figure (Priest, Rabbi, etc.)
- _____ Friend
- _____ Child
- _____ Police Officer
- _____ Therapist
- _____ Doctor
- _____ Phone Survey Operator ("Hi I'm calling from ...")
- _____ Door to Door Salesman
- _____ An Employee

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 12
UNDERSTANDING AND IDENTIFYING FEELINGS: PART ONE

Defined:

Feelings are an inner emotional response to our experience that tell us about the value of that experience to us.

Exercise: There are many words that are used to describe feelings. Make a list. They all should describe inner emotional responses.

"I feel - emotion" vs. "I feel - thinking" Statements:

Statements such as "I feel that..." or "I feel like..." almost always express thoughts. They are thinking statements. They describe observation rather than feeling. Below we will change an "I feel thinking - thinking" statement to an "I feel - emotion" statement.

"I feel that when you told your co-workers about our personal finances it was unfair."

"I feel bad when you tell your co-workers about our personal finances."

The purpose of these exercises is to teach us how to communicate our feelings to people so that we can let them understand how we are experiencing the world. That is, how we are affected by what they say or do.

Exercise: The following is a list of words. Say each of them out loud to the person next to you. Say each of them two or three times. Try using different tones of voice and get louder and softer. Pay attention to your feelings as you say each of the words.

Excited

Tender

Sad

Lonely

Edgy

Frustrated

Frightened

Contented

Depressed

Timid

Hurt

Jealous

Loving

Elated

Happy

Discussion:

What sensations does each bring up in you?

Do some words fit you?

Do some not seem to fit you?

Exercise: Answer the questions in the space provided.

Below, write down three words that you responded to most strongly.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is it about the three words that affected you?

If you are like most of the people in your group you are not likely to be aware of your feelings very often. Numerous factors get in the way. Many of us (especially men) have been raised to believe that feelings are not that important. This can go back to before we were even born. Studies show that parents buy blue for boys and pink for girls.

Discussion: How many of you are parents and can relate to this?

Also, although it is at a subconscious level, it has been shown that parents will often let a baby boy cry in his crib just a little bit longer than a baby girl. This teaches a boy that he is not rewarded for expressing emotion and teaches a girl that she is rewarded for expressing emotion. Men are taught that feelings are unpredictable, explosive, unmanly and irrational. If a man exhibits angry feelings, including violence, he may be seen as powerful (but untrustworthy). If he shows soft feelings he will be viewed as a "wimp." It is often very difficult for a man to change his image in our society.

With the push towards equality, a growing number of little girls are now being raised more like little boys and we are seeing that women are now growing up much the same way as men. That is, either not being able to express emotions or confused about them.

Exercise: The following exercises are geared towards sharpening your awareness of feelings. As you answer the following questions, try to remember what physical responses you may have experienced in each situation.

Identify three situations in the past month in which you felt happy. Use "I feel - emotion..." statements.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify three situations in the past month in which you felt sad. Use "I feel - emotion..." statements.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify three situations in the past month when you felt afraid. Use "I feel - emotion..." statements.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify three characteristics about your partner or close friend that you like. Use "I feel - emotion..." statements.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 13
UNDERSTANDING AND IDENTIFYING FEELINGS: PART TWO

When we are not aware of our feelings we can avoid facing the consequences of those feelings. We may also want to suppress our feelings because we don't want to deal with another person's response to them. However, once you are aware of your feelings it is your choice as to what you do with them. You can direct them, stuff them or escalate them.

Discussion: How do any of you express your feelings and how has it affected your relationships?

Exercise: Imagine a situation where you felt fear. Write down three ways of expressing fear directly.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Being Aware of Your Feelings:

Given all of this, there are many reasons why we should become more aware of our feelings. Feelings give ourselves and others valuable information about us. When people make decisions based on thinking and feeling they usually feel better about themselves.

Another reason to be aware of our feelings is because it reduces stress. People who don't express hurt feelings and put on a happy face will feel tremendous stress. Once they have expressed it, they usually feel better. Expressing hurtful feelings gets them off your chest and allows you to move on.

Discussion: Can any of you remember a time when you felt a great deal of pain. How did you feel when either you kept it inside or shared it with a confidant.

Being aware of your feelings can also be a matter of self protection. We discussed in the previous group how many men are taught not to show emotion and how it goes back to when they were babies. What often happens is that when a man and woman communicate it can be as if the two people are speaking different languages. Possibly, the man is speaking from a position of logic and reason and the woman is speaking from a position of emotion and feeling. This really isn't anyone's fault and this is not an absolute. Many men are raised to show emotion and many women are raised not to. Either way, a woman speaking from a position of logic and reason may feel her emotions "jerked around," become confused and then decide that she is being manipulated. When this happens the frustration may contribute to a violent outburst. Therefore, being aware of our feelings will help us feel less frustrated and manipulated.

Discussion: Does this make sense for any of you?

Another important reason to be aware of our feelings is that it will allow us to express them directly to our partner. It makes us a much more effective speaker.

Expressing Feelings More Clearly:

Once we become aware of our feelings we must then learn how to express them more clearly. Some words may combine different meanings. For example, the word irritated may mean different things to different people. It may mean a little angry to some and it may mean outraged to others. Often we do not pay attention to our true feelings in our responses to others. Remember: It is important to feel and then think before you speak.

Also, many people aren't aware of their feelings until some time after they occur. Remember: It is fine to tell you partner the next day. Just remember to pick a time that you both have time to discuss the matter.

Exercise: Imagine a situation where you felt fear. Write down three ways that you could have expressed that fear directly in the situation.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Exercise: There are numerous words to express how we are feeling. It is useful to expand our vocabularies and incorporate words into our everyday language that express how we feel because this allows us to more clearly communicate verbally which is our goal. Put a check mark next to any words listed below with which you are unfamiliar and we will discuss them.

affectionate	content	happy	nervous	tender
afraid	cranky	hateful	numb	tense
aggressive	curious	homesick	optimistic	tired
agitated	depressed	horrified	overwhelmed	touchy
agonized	detached	hot	pained	uncomfortable
ambivalent	disappointed	hung-over	playful	uneasy
amused	disgusted	hurt	pressured	vulnerable
angry	distant	hysterical	queasy	warm
anxious	distasteful	impatient	regretful	weak
apologetic	eager	indifferent	relaxed	worried
aroused	ecstatic	insecure	relieved	
arrogant	embarrassed	interested	resentful	
bashful	enraged	invigorated	resistant	
blissful	envious	irritated	sad	
bored	exasperated	jealous	satisfied	
calm	excited	lonely	scared	
centered	exhausted	loving	shocked	
cheerful	frightened	lustful	sick	
cold	frustrated	melancholy	spiteful	
comfortable	grateful	mellow	strong	

confident	grieving	miserable	surly
conflicted	guilty	moody	surprised

Remember: Feelings are tools for understanding and communicating. You have the right to say how you feel. You do not have the right to expect people to change because of your feelings. That is the risky part. Your partner may hear you express your hurt directly, and may choose to go on doing what hurts you. You can't make the choice for her and you can't really manipulate her into making the choice you want. If your partner changes her behavior, it will be because she sees clearly who you are and how you feel and not because she is being forced to change. When you get right down to the bottom line, you need to trust your partner's good will toward you. It is often a hard step to take. If trust is poor then it can be built up through expressing at least some feelings directly. It takes time.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.