

Relationships: Conflict Resolution Without Words

In the last few decades, partners have spent countless hours trying to “work out problems.” Yet over and over again they often come up against a major roadblock: they just don't see things the same way. No matter how long they talk and how hard they try, neither ends up feeling really heard and understood. While there are some couples that just naturally see things the same way, most people have a really hard time seeing things through the other person's eyes. What often happens when they “communicate” is that each person tries to get the other person to see things his or her way. Instead of solving the problem, each is trying to have control over how the other person sees things. This often leads to more conflict and frustration. While I am not suggesting that couples stop communicating over problems and issues, I am offering an additional way of resolving conflict: taking loving action in your own behalf. This form of conflict resolution is about action rather than talk. Following are some of the actions you can take that may make a world of difference in your relationship.

Loving Actions

1. Choose to be compassionate toward yourself and your partner rather than choosing to judge yourself or your partner. ...each person tries to get the other person to see things his or her way. Instead of solving the problem, each is trying to have control. Judging yourself and your partner will always lead to more conflict. Choosing to compassionately care about yourself and your partner can totally change the energy between you, even without words. If you believe that you or your partner are bad or wrong for your feelings, behavior, or point of view, then you will not be able to let go of judgment. You will move toward compassion when you understand and accept that each of you has very good reasons for your feelings, behavior, and point of view. Try compassionately accepting yourself and your partner and see what happens!
2. Choose to practice self-discipline in terms of saying nothing rather than behaving in an inflammatory way toward your partner. Practice zipping up your mouth! Practice letting go of having to be right! Practice walking away from a conflicted or heated situation, rather than jumping into the fray in the hopes of winning. If you look back, you will see that no one wins when both people are trying to control with anger, blame, explanations, debating, defending, lectures, or compliance. However, if you choose to walk away, walk away with love and compassion - intent on taking loving care of yourself rather than punishing your partner. Walking away in anger is just another way to control.
3. Choose to accept that you have no control over your partner's feelings and behavior, but that you have total control over your own actions. It is much easier to let go of trying to control your partner when you move into acceptance regarding who your partner is. Trying to change your partner is a total waste of energy. Changing yourself moves you into personal power.
4. Choose to take loving care of yourself in the face of the other person's choices. You will find yourself wanting to talk about problems when you see yourself as a victim of your partner's choices. However, when you accept your partner for who he or she is and accept your lack of control over your partner, you can then see your way clear toward taking loving action in your own behalf. Asking the question, “What is the loving action toward myself right now?” will lead to ideas of how to take loving care of your self. Asking, “If I were an enlightened being, how would I be acting right now?” will open the door to creative ways of taking loving care of yourself. Loving actions are actions that support your own highest good without harming your partner. For example, if you are tired of often being frustrated and rushed because your partner is generally late leaving for an event, you might decide to take your own car each time your partner is not ready on time. While your partner might not like your choice, your action is not harmful to him or her. It is an action that stops the power struggle and takes care of yourself. Letting go of trying to change your partner and taking loving action for yourself are the keys to conflict resolution without words.

About the Author

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