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YOU CAN TURN
CONFLICT
INTO
Closeness
WORKBOOK

7 Communication Skills
of Successful Marriages

Preface

For the past 15 plus years I've been on a quest to find the keys to unlock the mystery of communication. I didn't want to provide a recipe of communication tips-and-tricks to help someone get their way. I wanted a recipe to create closeness from conflict. It needed to be more than just a change in the behavior it had to change the person. I've put together the recipe that not only changes the outcome it changes the baker.

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Introduction

Having a good relationship isn't the result of a perfect alignment of the stars or the luck of the draw. It takes skill. Skills to be more precise. Having a great relationship is the result of developing and refining a special set of skills that create closeness. This means that there are relationship skills. Being good at relationships takes more than being a good person. Just like being good at dance or math isn't the result of just being a good person. Being good at relationships takes a commitment to learn the principles and discipline to practice the strategies of great communication.

This workbook is a place for you to “practice” applying the principles and strategies of effective, communication. For more information about the principles and strategies go to EmilHarker.com and get the book, eBook, or audio book. As you commit to apply these principles in a consistent manner you will develop the skills necessary to create and sustain relationships that satisfy your deepest desires to connect. There are forums for you to ask questions and share your successes and help other's in their marriage adventure.

As you engage in this journey, I welcome your stories of how you have applied these principles and how they have helped you. Also, if you have comments or questions, please email me at emilharker@gmail.com.



Commitment #1

Assuming Good Intent

To a greater or lesser degree emotions rule us human beings. It's as if emotions have supernatural powers of their own. For some people emotions are king. They may not realize it, and they may not admit it, but for some people emotions become accepted as facts as real as events. Advertisers know this and that's why billions of dollars are spent on commercials designed get to our hearts in order to get to our wallets.

Emotion is nothing more than a snapshot of the current chemical make-up of the brain. That's why without any other changes in a person's life, by simply taking an amphetamine, or an antidepressant, a person can change their mood and feel fantastic. In simple terms, when the level of dopamine (a neurotransmitter) in the brain is high, we feel excited and motivated. When serotonin (another neurotransmitter) levels are high we feel like life is satisfying, fulfilling, and meaningful. Amphetamines are designed primarily to increase the production of dopamine. SSRI's (Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors) are chemicals that work by causing the nerve cells to "inhibit" the "re-uptake" of serotonin by the cells that release it. This process increases the amount of serotonin in the space between the nerve cells called the "synaptic cleft." The more serotonin available, the person is going to feel like life is good and satisfying even though they haven't done anything different in their life. For many people whose chemical factory is out of whack and they are living a healthy lifestyle and principle based living, these drugs are a beautiful miracle. On the other hand, these drugs are nothing more than a Band-Aid for those who should feel crappy and depressed when their lifestyle and decisions are not following proven principles and practices of healthy living.

Besides adding new chemicals into the brain to alter chemical levels, there are other ways to change emotions. In any given situation

our assumptions or our beliefs determine emotions. This concept of emotions being changed by our thoughts is what Victor Frankl discovered in the concentration camps. His experiences and insights are found in his classic psychology book “*Mans Search for Meaning.*” He discovered that a person’s emotional experience could be altered by what one thinks about the situation.

Science is only beginning to understand the power of the mind. The effects of thoughts and behavior on emotions is the entire basis for a wide range of different therapy models like Rational Emotive Therapy, (RET) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Knowing that thoughts determine our emotions means that what we experience in a situation has more to do with what we *think* about what is happening, than what is happening.



For example:

A former client of mine, Sarah (not her real) was frustrated and disappointed that her husband, Jim (not his real name) wasn’t ambitious like he was when they first got married. She found herself getting more and more resentful that his desire to be successful in money and in adventure wasn't similar to hers. According to Sarah, Jim didn’t seem to be concerned whether or not they had a substantial savings account or retirement fund or a financial account to travel and vacation. She said that he was a fantastic father, much more patient than she was. He was a loving, understanding and dependable. But what really got her goat was that he wasn’t the ambitious “sexy-go-getter” she married. This disappointment and resentment caused her to find him unattractive even though she talked about what a “stunner” he was when they got married. She took these changes to mean that he didn’t care about her. As a result she got more and more resentful and distant. Feeling depressed, trapped, and hopeless she came to see me.

I learned that Sarah was extremely ambitious. She loved being in the lime-light. She liked meeting new people and making things happen in the business world. She struggled with feelings of guilt that she wasn’t

the kind of mother she wanted to be. It just didn't come natural for her like she thought it would. Although having a family was important to her, she was impatient, and easily bored at home. She preferred being at work to being at home. In this scenario Sarah felt hurt by what she thought was a lack of caring behavior from Jim. Feeling hurt and betrayed, she pulled away from him.

In this scenario, what was it that created the emotions? Were Sarah's emotions the result of her husband not being ambitious anymore? Most people would agree. A closer look through will show us that it isn't what Jim is doing but what Sarah thinks about what Jim is doing. In other words it's not the behavior or situation that is the problem, it's what she thinks about the behavior or situation that is the problem. In one perspective Sarah was assuming that her desires and wants weren't important to her husband. She interpreted his lack of financial ambition to mean that he didn't care about security, or making good memories together. I introduced the principle of "*Assuming Good Intent*," a process that helps people open their minds and explore other perspectives that diminishes hurt and increases clarity. I asked her to explain how Jim's behavior is ideal for her instead of seeing him as lazy and selfish. She followed a few simple steps (I will walk you through in just a minute) and she began to see her husband's behavior and their situation much differently.

She saw that her husband's lack of *business* ambition wasn't really laziness at all. She started looking at how he was ambitious but in a different way. What she discovered through looking at his motivation from a different perspective was that his ambition was absolutely perfect for her. He believed in the importance of family just as much as she did. He wanted to be a great dad and have a great family. Jim helped out a lot at home because he wanted to support Sarah's career. He didn't feel he could pursue his personal business success at the expense of the family. Being a caregiver came naturally to him. He was patient and a great teacher. The problem Jim had in their relationship was that he didn't

know how to articulate why he wasn't so driven for financial success. Sarah's problem was that she couldn't see another perspective.

The more Sarah searched to explanation how Jim was what she wanted, the more she discovered how ideal the situation was. He was able to be the care-taker so she could pursue *her* financial ambitions. His support and encouragement for her to succeed in business was really loving. She realized that Jim wasn't lazy at all. In fact, he was just as driven, but driven to provide a nurturing family environment for the kids. As a result of therapy the only thing that needed changing was her perspective, and for Jim to communicate his thoughts and feelings better. The next thing they needed to do was put this plan of the new perspective into action.

"Assuming Good Intent", is different in substance than just trying to find the good in a situation. Assuming Good Intent is looking for the good in the person's behavior, not just the situation. Assuming Good Intent helped Sarah see herself and her husband much more accurately. As she came to see her husband as being loving, supportive, and ambitious, where once she saw him as being lazy, and selfish, as if by magic, Jim became really attractive.

"Assuming Good Intent" is explaining the motivation of the behavior of the other as if the other person was trying to do something noble, good, or least an attempt to avoid something bad.

Wouldn't it be safe to say that you and your spouse share this belief? Therefore, why not maintain that belief all the time. If as a principle you believe that your spouse truly wants what is best for you, you will be right more often than not. Yes, there will be times when your spouse and maybe even you will be thoughtless, or inconsiderate or stressed or preoccupied and not attend to the needs of your spouse. But, that should be the exception not the rule. (If it is true that your spouse doesn't want what is best for you, Assuming Good Intent is the fastest way to expose his/her true character and intentions. On the rare



occasion that this occurs the next chapter “Define and Accept Reality” becomes especially important and powerful.)

Three Components to Assuming Good Intent



There are three components to Assuming Good Intent. These components must be included in a compelling believable explanation to the motivation of the others behavior. If any of these components are missing, you are not Assuming Good Intent. As soon as you feel upset, miffed, bugged or hurt, you are probably not Assuming Good Intent. So when you are miffed, bugged, hurt or offended, use these steps to reduce your frustration and set yourself up for a powerful conversation for change. (Using “Assuming Good Intent” as a powerful component to create change will be explained more in chapter 3). The three components of Assuming Good Intent are:

- 1) They want to feel good,
- 2) They want others to feel good,
- 3) They are doing the best they can.

If you assume good intentions and you are right you win. If you assume good intentions and you are wrong, you win too.

PRACTICE

Create a list of 10 behaviors your spouse did/does that left you miffed, upset, frustrated, hurt, disappointed, bothered, angry, etc.

Example: “My husband left his shoes by my side of the bed again even after I have told him that it bothers me. I’ve tripped over his shoes countless times and recently when I got out of bed one night I fell and hurt my shoulder. I’m upset because it’s obvious that he doesn’t care about me, or my feelings.” (I realize that this issue is not that big of a deal for many couples, however, the issue isn’t the important thing, it’s the concept.)





Now that you have identified behaviors that the other does that bugs, hurts, disappoints etc., explain the behavior of the other “Assuming Good Intent.” Assume that the last thing they wanted to do was hurt, frustrate, upset, disappoint you etc. Describe why they did what they did. Leave out anything that makes them appear thoughtless, insensitive, inconsiderate, or hurtful.

Example: (Regarding shoes by the bed. This is what she might write). “Considering how he has been working on putting his shoes away, it isn’t that he doesn’t care about me. I know it is really convenient for him to take his shoes off by his bed because it is where he changes his clothes. This would fit the criteria for “he wants to feel good.” Sometimes he forgets to put his shoes away because there are times when he is pre-occupied with accomplishing the next task and then forgets to put them away after he took them off. So, this sense of productivity could fit that “he wants me to feel good” component. And I know this is a habit that he is trying to change so it would be safe to assume that “he is doing the best he can.”



Your Turn

Explain the intentions of your spouse by implementing the principle “Assuming Good Intent.” (There is room for several items.)

consider hurtful behavior. If we discover that people are being hurtful, we can then use that information to make different decisions. We use “Assuming Good Intent” combined with the next principle “Defining and Accepting Reality” to become empowered and create change.

This one principle alone has made a difference in the lives of many people. Please email me how this chapter has made a difference in your relationship. Emilharker@gmail.com

Commitment #2

Accepting Reality

Imagine a guy walking down the sidewalk. Further up the sidewalk he sees what looks like a huge hole in the sidewalk. Next to what looks like a hole in the sidewalk is a pile of dirt the size of a car. As he gets closer, he notices that there isn't any police tape, orange traffic cones, or other device to protect or warn people of the danger. As he continues to walk, he says to himself. "This is ridiculous. Someone should cover the hole up with something or set up barricades so people who are walking on the sidewalk don't fall in." Instead of changing directions he continues to walk toward the hole. If that person continued walking and ended up falling in the hole, wouldn't we question that person's level of intelligence? I mean what kind of person sees a potential problem and then continues forward without changing their direction? The problem is, we do that kind of stuff all the time. We make decisions based on what we believe *should* happen and not on what *does* happen. And we do this every day. From expecting our teenager to get out of bed on their own and make it to school on time, to expecting the kids to turn off the TV and work on their homework the first time we ask them. We walk right into the hole.

Accepting reality is actually a two-stage process. In order to accept reality we have to first define it. In this parable of the "Man on the Sidewalk" the man defined the reality that there was a hole in the sidewalk. He did not accept reality because he continued on his way and fell into the hole. If he had accepted reality he would have spent less time telling himself what *should have* happened and more time on figuring out a way around the hold and then changing his course of direction.

If you believe that something other than what it *is*, you are going to be disappointed. Whatever is happening is the reality. What we think about what is happening does not change what is happening. What



happens, happens. Accepting reality is the first step in creating a new reality.

As you recall situations in the past that left you hurt, disappointed or frustrated, describe without emotion what happened as if you were narrating to someone who is blind. What happened? Be careful not to read into things. Describe it as if you were a spy watching through binoculars and listening through a wire-tap. What words were used? What was the tone? What was the body doing? What about the hands, eyes, hips, and facial expression. Ask yourself the following questions. 1) Are you surprised by the persons behavior? 2) Do you have any evidence that would suggest that this person's behavior would be different than it was?

If the behavior of the person is new, and uncharacteristic, then find out what is going on in that persons life that would create an uncharacteristic behavior. If the behavior is characteristic, ask yourself why you think that person would act differently. If the person's behavior is consistent, you can safely assume the behavior will continue. The more consistent the behavior is, the more confident you can be that the behavior will continue. If you are pretty sure this person responds a certain way 90% of the time you had better count on it happening. How reasonable would it be to be surprised if this person did exactly what was predicted? Identifying reality, is giving yourself permission to see things as they really are, not how you believe they should be, but how they *really* are.

Not accepting reality not only sounds crazy, it is crazy. Because, not accepting reality is delusional. You wouldn't want to be delusional would you? If you don't accept reality you will end up frequently disappointed and frustrated.

PRACTICE

Refer to the list of situations or behaviors that left you hurt, miffed, upset etcetera in the "Assuming Good Intent" exercise. Describe what

happened as if you were a spy. Don't write down what you think they did, or what you think they meant. Be as exact and objective as you can. Answer the following questions which will help you *define reality*. Then write a statement about how you are going to modify your life or change your expectations based on reality. That is called *accepting reality*.

These are the questions you ask to help you define reality:

1. Are you surprised by the persons' behavior in this situation? Would this person normally respond a different way?
2. What evidence do you have that would suggest that this person behavior would be different in this situation?
3. Is there anything that you can do about what happened, or about the choices that somebody already made?

After you have answered these questions, write a statement about the likelihood of it happening again. This is where you plan on the behavior that your predict. Your mantra could be: If you can predict, you shall prepare. This is the "accepting" part of "Defining and Accepting Reality." By accepting reality are going to do something to prevent it if you can, or you will do something different *when* it happens again.

Example:

My husband leaves his shoes by the side of the bed sometimes even after I have told him that I don't like it.

Question #1. Am I surprised? No

Question #2 Do I have any evidence to suggest that this persons behavior would be different? No. Because, this has happened several times before.



Question #3 Is there anything I can do about what happened? I could tell him that it bothers me, but I've already don't that, so... No.

Statement: My husband leaves his shoes by the bed. It will probably happen a few times a week. I hope it doesn't happen more often than that. He has been working on this for about 3 weeks and it seems that he puts his shoes away more often than not, but not every time. It doesn't

mean that he doesn't care about me. It means that he has serious ADD and gets distracted easily. When it does happen I can kindly remind him, and I can just realize that I don't need to take it personal. I can just put his shoes away sometimes and not make a big deal of it. If it happens a lot I can bring it up to him and encourage him to keep working on it because his efforts mean a lot to me.



This process can be done with all sorts of issues. Remember, the issue really isn't the problem, it's how you deal with it.

Note: Some things are relatively small things. Like the issue with the shoes. But some things can be deal breakers like honesty, fidelity, abuse or addictions. The principle still applies. You have a choice as to what you are going to do about it. When someone continues to do something that is relationally destructive to a marriage, there are only two ways of looking at it. As a therapist I see them as both equal to the same outcome. They are either unable or unwilling to do anything about it. If they are unable to do anything about it, then why would you expect them to change? If they are unwilling, why would you expect them to change? Both have the same outcome.

As a spouse who is married to a person who continues to do things that are destructive to the marriage, you have three choices. 1) Keep complaining and hope that the relationship will improve. 2) Accept it and see if you can design a life that is satisfying around what is happening. 3) Accept the reality that it will continue and make a decision to get out of the relationship. Just because it is simple does not mean it is easy. For more information about this principle in situations where the behaviors are destructive to marriage, get the eBook, the full book in print or the audio book.

Your Turn

Write what your spouse does that bugs, hurts, bothers, frustrates etc...

1. Are you surprised?

2. Do you have any evidence that suggests that this person wouldn't do this kind of thing?

3. Is there anything you can do about what happened?

4. Write a new statement accepting that this behavior will continue at the rate it has. What you are going to do about it? Etc.

Try it again.

What your spouse does that bugs, hurts, bothers, frustrates etc...



1. Are you surprised?

2. Do you have any evidence that suggests that this person wouldn't do this kind of thing?

3. Is there anything you can do about what happened?

4. Write a new statement accepting that this behavior will continue at the rate it has. What you are going to do about it? Etc.

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Here is another practice spot.

What your spouse does that bugs, hurts, bothers, frustrates etc...



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Another practice spot

What your spouse does that bugs, hurts, bothers, frustrates etc...

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2. Do you have any evidence that suggests that this person wouldn't do this kind of thing?

3. Is there anything you can do about what happened?

4. Write a new statement accepting that this behavior will continue at the rate it has. What you are going to do about it? Etc.

I would love to hear how this chapter has made a difference in your life. To share your stories please email me at emilharker@gmail.com.

Commitment #3

Communicate with Desired Outcome in Mind

Honesty in communication has taken a sour turn. I've listened to countless scenarios where husbands and wives justify their rude and sometimes hurtful comments, saying they were just being "honest with their feelings." I will inevitably ask them, if what they said worked, to get what they wanted. I sometimes get the "deer in the headlights look," as if this was the first time that thought crossed their mind. They had somehow bought into the idea that as long as they were being "honest with their feelings" they would be heard and understood. They also believed that if the other person didn't listen and understand when they were being "honest with their feelings," it would be proof that the other person wasn't caring or considerate. This of course is not true.

Being "honest with your feelings" is a cop out for being "responsible" for your feelings. Let me point out the difference. Have you ever been so mad that you just wanted to scream or hit something? In therapy we call this outward expression of our feelings "catharsis." We can apply the same concept to communication. "Communication catharsis" is the release of emotional tension in a verbal expression of frustration. Communication catharsis is emotional venting by blasting the other person with words and phrases like a hand grenade. It can also be expressed soft and passive aggressively, like a razor blade that cuts deeply. Both expressions are damaging. Communication catharsis actually increases the relational tension it attempts in vain to reduce. Compare communication catharsis with what I call "communication connection." Communication connection is a respectful and responsible way to be "honest with your feelings." The goal of communication connection is to

understand the other person and be understood, thus bringing the couple closer together.

I hold it true that there are natural laws that pertain to relationships just like there are natural laws that pertain to physics. The difference is that the emotional world is much more complex than the physical world. When we understand and apply these principles when our feelings are hurt, or we are disappointed, we increase the likelihood of getting our desired outcome.

Communicating with the “Desired Outcome In Mind” sometimes I just call DOIM for short, is a sensitive and strategic way to say what needs to be said in an honest and respectful way. It also increases the likelihood of the other person really listening and caring about what is said. For a deeper explanation of this principle please refer to the book.



PRACTICE

Refer to the list of situations that left you hurt, miffed, upset, frustrated, etc. Write one of them down in the space below. As you decide how to approach the person to influence change, consider the following prompts. After this consideration, design a strategy that will increase the likelihood of getting a desired outcome.

Step 1. Write down what upset you.

Step 2. At the end of the conversation with the other person, what do you want the other person to think?

What do you want the other person to do?

What do you want the other person to say?

Step 3. What would the other person need to see, hear, or experience to increase the likelihood of making the desired outcome happen?

Step 4. Write out what you would do and say and then ask yourself how the other might respond.

Step 5. Carry out your plan.



Example:

Step 1. Write down what upset you. “My wife hasn’t initiated sex in over a month.”

Step 2. At the end of the interaction what do you want the other person to think? “I want her to think that it is important for her to initiate sex.”

What do you want the other person to do? “Initiate sex about once a week.”

What do you want the other person to say? “I would like her to say that she wants to initiate sex more often instead of waiting for me to initiate it.”

Step 3. What would the other person need to see, hear, or experience to increase the likelihood of making the desired outcome happen? “She would need to feel like I understood that it is not that she doesn’t care, but that it doesn’t come natural like it does for me. She would need to know that when she initiates sex that it sends a message to me that she finds me attractive and desirable. She would need to be approached gently, when we are alone. She would want to hear that I find her attractive and that being close and feeling close to her through sex is something that I find very appealing. She would need to know that I want a mutually satisfying marriage with her.

Step 4. Write out what you would have to say and do then ask yourself how the how the other might respond. Imagine if you said something like... “I must not be attractive to you anymore, because it seems like you don’t care if we are sexually intimate...” NOPE, SHE’LL PROBABLY JUST GET MAD. Compare that to something like “Sweetheart, I really love you. I love feeling close to you. It is important that you know that I think you are beautiful to me and that I like being sexually intimate with you. I want to know that you like feeling close to me and that you also think it is important to be sexually intimate with me. Is there anything I could do to make you more comfortable in taking the initiative more often in our sexual relationship?” That might work, she might say something like “Well, I thought I initiated sex a few times ago, isn’t that enough?” THEN I’D HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE. You

know, that's right you did initiate a little while ago. If my dreams came true, I'd love it if you initiated once a week. Is there something I could do to help this happen more often? SHE MIGHT SAY SOMETHING LIKE "Something that would really help is if we could get the kids in bed earlier than 9:00 pm, because by about that time, I'm just so exhausted all I think about is sleep. SHE COULD ALSO SAY SOMETHING LIKE... "I don't think that is in the cards for you. I just don't feel comfortable initiating sex unless I'm really in the mood. I think this is just something that the guy should do more than the girl." If this is the case, explore HER feelings about what it means if she were to initiate sex more often. Try not to bulldoze her feelings. She is giving you a wonderful gift of a look into her soul. So, proceed with care." (If she is adamant that initiating sex more often is not going to change, refer back to the second principle "Defining and Accepting Reality." The more you help her share her feelings the more you are defining reality.)

Thinking this process through, helps you identify areas where you need to be more mindful. Taking the time to do this process communicates the importance of taking personal responsibility to make the relationship better. It communicates that you respect your spouse's thoughts and feelings enough to really think about what you are saying, before saying it and before you get upset and vent your frustrations. Also, you increase the likelihood of getting your desired outcome.

Once you have thought this through all the way. Go to step 5.
Step 5. Carry out the plan.

You try!

Step 1. Write down what upset you.



Step 2. At the end of the interaction what do you want the other person to think?

What do you want the other person to do?

What do you want the other person to say?

Step 3. What would the other person need to see, hear, or experience to increase the likelihood of making the desired outcome happen?

Step 2. At the end of the interaction what do you want the other person to think?

What do you want the other person to do?

What do you want the other person to say?

Step 3. What would the other person need to see, hear, or experience to increase the likelihood of making the desired outcome happen?

Commitment #4

Clear Direct and Sensitive

Clear, Direct, and Sensitive are elements of responsible communication. When we combine these with the three fundamental communication commitments: 1)Assuming Good Intent, 2)Accepting Reality, and 3)Communicating with the Desired Outcome in Mind, we maximize cooperation and closeness.

To illustrate the difference between Clear, Direct, and Sensitive as elements of good communication, turn the video player on in your mind and watch as Megan asks Tommy to help with the dishes in four different ways. Imagine Tommy working on the computer at the kitchen table and his wife Megan says, “It would sure be nice if I had time to do the things I want to do.” Notice, she isn’t clear about what she wants help with, it is assumed. She is also not direct as she doesn’t identify anyone or direct the comment to anyone. Again, this is also assumed. Even if the words are spoken very softly, the request is ambiguous and manipulative as it employs an element of guilt to motivate. In order to improve cooperation and closeness we want to reduce any assumptions and miscommunications. When we communicate clear direct and sensitively we maximize positive outcomes and create closeness.

Imagine in the scenario of Megan asking for help to do the dishes, if she said something clear but not really direct or sensitive. “I sure wish I had help with the dishes, so I could do what I wanted to do.” Although the request was clear that she wanted help with the dishes, it was assumed that the request was to the husband. Even if she said it nice enough, and it got her husbands attention, and the strategy worked, it isn’t ideal as it demonstrates a lack of responsibility of the wife to make sure there aren’t any assumptions. If the tone has a little lilt in it, there may even be an attempt of a guilt trip to motivate.



Now imagine her using clear and direct but insensitive communication. “I could sure use your help! Why don’t you pull yourself away from the computer for a minute and help me do these dishes!” Even if she got compliance, she will most likely get some resentment too.

Imagine if she put all three components clear direct and sensitive together. “Tommy, I’d love to finish the last few chapters of the book I’m reading. Could you help me finish the dishes real quick?”

She is clear in her request for helping with the dishes. She is direct when she addresses Tommy and get’s his attention before making the request. She is sensitive in her tone and in her explanation as to why she would like his help. Communicating Clear, Direct, and Sensitive employs the three fundamentals of communication: 1) Assume Good intent - She assumes that he will help if he can. 2) Accepting Reality - She accept the reality that if he can’t help he won’t be able to. The reality is that she might be doing the dishes alone. She is also “Accepting Reality” that unless she really gets his attention, he might not even hear her make the request. 3) Communicating with the Desired Outcome in Mind, she approaches him in a manner that is clear and respectful. No guilt trips. She takes into consideration that it might be helpful for him to understand why she is interrupting what he is doing for him to help her.

PRACTICE



1. Write down times when you were hurt or offended or refer to the list in “Assuming Good Intent.”
2. Explain the behavior of the other using “Assuming Good Intent.”
3. Since there is nothing that can be done about what is already done, “Define and Accept Reality.”
4. Write out the desired outcome.
5. Now write out a statement that combines all of these components in an actual statement.

Example:

Let's imagine that Megan asks Tommy to help do the dishes and he stops what he is doing to help her. When he starts to help, the phone rings and Megan takes the phone call and leaves Tommy to do the dishes on his own.

1. The offense: So in this scenario the thing that upset the husband was when the wife left him to do the dishes by himself after he was asked to help out.

2. Explain the behavior of the other using "Assuming Good Intent": She wouldn't have left me to do the dishes unless the phone call was important.

3. Define and Accept Reality: Since there is nothing that can be done about what is already done, Define and Accept Reality. I already did the dishes so there is nothing that can be done now. If I complain that I did them by myself she will just get mad.

4. Write out the desired outcome. I want her to appreciate that I did the dishes.

5. Now write out a statement that combines all of these components in an actual statement. "You know what? I started getting upset after you walked away from the kitchen after calling me in to help you, but then I realized that I was being unfair because you probably didn't mean to hurt me at all, and I just took offense. I'm sure that something really important came up or you wouldn't have left. Is everything O.K.?"

Your Turn

Write down times when you were hurt or offended.



Explain the behavior of the other using assuming good intent.

Since there is nothing that can be done about what is already done,
Define and Accept Reality.

Write out the desired outcome.

Now write out a statement that combines all of these components in an
actual statement.

“That’s all fine and dandy when you are going to approach someone when there aren’t hurt feelings and such. What about the times when you are hurt frustrated, disappointed, miffed or bugged?” Here is a suggestion on how to bring up issues when you are upset. Please notice that although there is a tone of frustration, the components of Clear, Direct and Sensitive are present. You should also notice the components of Assuming Good Intent, and Defining and Accepting Reality and communicating with the “Desired Outcome in Mind.” Let’s say that I was the wife and was planning on my husband coming home from work to have lunch. Then at 12:30 pm he doesn’t show up. She call’s and no answer, and it goes to voice mail. It’s easy to see how upset and hurt or disappointed she would be in this situation. Around 1:30 pm she calls and he answers. Here is an example of how she could handle the situation.



Example: (with real emotion) “Hey, I’m really hurt by how insensitive you were. We had plans to go to lunch today and you didn’t call or text me or do anything to let me know that your plans changed. I was really looking forward to spending time with you especially since we haven’t had a lot of time together, and it felt like you just blew me off. I realize that I may not be right about this. And I know that you were looking forward to having lunch with me too and the last thing you would want to happen is to stand me up. So, I know it’s safe to assume that something important came up, but for the life of me I can’t think of anything right now, because I’m too mad. Can you tell me what happened that prevented you from being able to have lunch with me or at least be able to call me?”

The sensitive part might be hard to identify at first, but the element of taking responsibility for not assuming good intent is a powerful way to turn an attack into a confession which really makes it easier for the person you are talking to, to avoid feeling attacked. Here is the cool thing about this process. You still get to say what is on your mind with what you are upset about. You are still being real with your feelings. But it doesn't end there. You are also being responsible with your feelings. You take accountability for also misinterpreting the situation based on a lack of information.

So, here are the steps:

1. Describe what happened that bugged, miffed, hurt or disappointed you.
2. Take full responsibility for getting upset and not "Assuming Good Intent."
3. Employ the principle "Assuming Good Intent" by describing what the real intentions of the other could be.
4. Ask a question for clarification.

Note: It may not be easy to identify the good intent of the other especially when you are upset. Trust the principle though. All you have to do is admit that you are having a hard time finding the good intent, but that you know there is probably good intent there that you can't see at the moment. Finally, check in to see what you missed.

You try:



1. What is something that your spouse did that hurt, miffed, upset, disappointed or bugged you. _____

2. Write what you might say to indicate that you admit that you didn't Assume Good Intent: It could be something like. "I know this wasn't your intention," or "I know you didn't do this on purpose."

3. Write what you think the good intent was: Do your best to see if you can identify the good intent by following the process of "Assuming Good Intent." If you can't find it, then follow the instructions about admitting that you can't find the good intent and that you know it is there but you just need help finding it.

4. Ask a question for clarification:

I want to hear from you. Please send me an email with any questions about this principle or stories with how this program has helped you. Emilharker@gmail.com

Commitment #5

Killing Criticism

There are times when in spite of our best intentions our natural tendencies can get the best of us. As a result, feelings of insecurity, hurt or frustration can come out hot and spicy. Out of the dark abyss of pain, criticisms from frustration and disappointment flow like hot lava. This chapter is devoted to helping you respond to the criticisms you receive from your spouse or other people. “Killing Criticisms” is the way to stay in complete control of the interaction when someone is being critical. “Killing Criticism” is listening for and responding only to the element of truth in a criticism.

All criticism will have an element of truth ranging from 0% (totally untrue) to 100% (totally true). After a criticism has been stated, your initial response should be something like, “There is probably some truth to that.” Even if you don’t say it out loud, you should say that to yourself. The person who was criticized will determine from 0-100% what truth there is. If there isn’t any truth to the statement, by default ask, “What do you mean by that?” This will give the person who was criticized time to sort through the criticisms for the golden nuggets of truth. It will also give the person being critical another chance to make the statement in a way that may be less spicy and more specific.

If there is truth to the statement, even just a little, respond only to the part that is true. Refrain from making excuses or trying to explain. Just stick with the truth of the statement and acknowledge it. If you struggle to find any semblance of truth and the critical person is adamant that there is truth, use the ace in your back pocket - “Perhaps from your perspective it might look like that.” Don't say it just to say it. Make sure that if you ever say this, you really can see it from their perspective. This validates their perspective without agreeing with any untruth. Do not try

to minimize the truth in the criticism! This is the most common mistake when agreeing with truth. The more truth you can agree with the more power you have. You will see the proof of this when you experience it in real life. If you minimize the criticism, the criticizer will maximize the criticism. If you maximize the truth without apology, you kill the criticism dead in its tracks. (For a more detailed explanation get the book, eBook, audiobook or DVD from EmilHarker.com)

“Killing Criticisms” is the process of dealing with criticism. As we have discussed earlier, the only time people are critical is when they are hurt, insecure or frustrated. At this moment there is no use in trying to be logical and reasonable in an attempt to explain. The more upset someone is, the less able they are to listen. It’s as if there is a great deal of momentum in the direction of being upset and any change in that direction will be met with more frustration and anger. Even if there is a completely good rational explanation, it is difficult to turn from Speaker to Listener. From personal experience, I know that when I am upset, I am not interested in an excuse or explanation until I feel like that person understands why I am upset. There will be a time when an explanation will be beneficial and heard, but not yet. Hold off just a moment until the time is right. The next chapter will explain when the time is right. Right now, the only thing you need to focus on is to find the golden nuggets of truth. Your job, if you do it well, will be to agree with as much truth as you can. The more truth you can agree with, the more power you get. This may seem totally absurd and counterintuitive, but I promise you it will work.

This is one of the most powerful communication principles and strategies to understand and apply. Once you are able to master this, you take control of the conversation even if the interaction is hostile.

Steps in applying the principle “Killing Criticisms:”

1. Write down 10-15 critical statements you may have heard from your spouse.

2. Write down what percentage of truth you believe is in that statement.
3. Write down how the statement is true.

Example:



1. “You don’t help out enough around the house.”
2. 20%
3. “There are times when I don’t take the time to straighten things up after leaving a room, making sure the room is in order. And there are times when I don’t clean up after myself when I start a project.”

(Note: when you are in a conversation with someone, don’t actually tell the other person what percentage of truth you think there is in their criticism unless you want them to “wig-out” on you. Unless of course if they are 100% right in their criticism - then you can say, “You are 100% right.”)

Your Turn:

Criticism #1



1. Write out the criticism that you heard:

2. What percentage of truth do you think is there? (Be honest. Maximize don’t minimize.) _____

3. Write out what or how they are right about their criticism:

Criticism #2

1. Write out the criticism that you heard:

2. What percentage of truth do you think is there? (Be honest. Maximize don't minimize.) _____

3. Write out what or how they are right about their criticism:

Criticism #3

1. Write out the criticism that you heard:

2. What percentage of truth do you think is there? (Be honest. Maximize don't minimize.) _____

3. Write out what or how they are right about their criticism:

Criticism #4

1. Write out the criticism that you heard:

2. What percentage of truth do you think is there? (Be honest. Maximize don't minimize.) _____

3. Write out what or how they are right about their criticism:

Please share with me your stories how this principle has helped you in your relationships. I'd love to hear. emilharker@gmail.com.

Commitment #6

The Art of Fencing in Marriage

In marriage, as in all relationships there will be conflict. Knowing how to handle conflict can turn destructive conflict into constructive conflict. Certainly the ideal situation is where everyone is nice to each other and never says a cross word. That's all nice when there are unicorns and leprechauns dancing in "forever land" but in the real world, people get hurt feelings, have bad days and sometimes get a little irritated and upset. So, instead of crossing our fingers or wishing upon a star we might as well lovingly prepare for times when the people we care about will be mean or hurtful. Because, its just a matter of time before we have bad days, when our weaknesses will come out loud and clear and we will need someone to have our back when we fall apart.

As I have studied conflict, I've realized that there are 5 components in conflict between people. Knowing how to respond to the elements of conflict puts you in the drivers seat of control, even in the most intense and hostile interactions. The five elements of destructive conflict are:

1. Criticisms - A statement about what the other person did or is: "You were late." "You are never on time!" "You only care about yourself." "It's your fault."

2. Questions - Is a statement formed as a question to get information from the other person. "Why didn't you call me when you were late?" "Why do you drive so slow?" "What were you thinking when you said that?"

3. Declaration - A declaration is a statement describing how that person thinks. It is also a general statement about the situation. "This is

ridiculous!” “I’ve had it!” “This makes no sense at all.” “I can’t take this anymore!” “I’m done.”

4. Command - A command is a firm statement demanding action. “Pull your head out!” “Knock it off!” “Don’t do it anymore!” “Leave it alone!”

5. Pause or Moment Silence - This is the moment when there is a silent pause in the interaction. Sometimes it’s as short as a beat in a joke, where the punch line is delivered. It’s that moment of silence where things aren’t really settled, but there isn’t a lot being said verbally. This is the moment where the tide of the conversation can change.

So, to “parry” destructive conflict.

1. Criticism - Good news! You already know how to do this from the last chapter of “Killing Criticism.” Listen for and respond only to the element of truth. Maximize not minimize. If there is zero truth, just ask, “What do you mean?”

2. Questions - In conflict when the other person is upset they aren’t listening. So to help them transition from speaker to listener when they are upset, respond to their question with another question, “Do you really want to know?” This question will expose the sincerity of the question. If the person’s question is really a criticism formed as a question, you will expose it. Another question to have at your ready is, “Is it O.K. if we disagree?” or, “Is it O.K. that we don’t see eye-to-eye on this?” Any form of this question will do.

3 & 4. Declaration and Command – A declaration is a statement of how the person feels. For example: “I can’t believe this!” or “I’m done!” Another form of a declaration is a general statement about the situation. “This is going nowhere!” or “We are going in circles.” Both types of declaration statements are dealt with the same way. When people say a declaration or a command, they say it with an emotion or a set of emotions. Instead of responding to the words they say, simply identify the emotion or set of emotions in the statement and then acknowledge that emotion in your response. If the person says something like, “This is

ridiculous!” and the emotion that they express is frustration, you simply say in a sincere manner. “You seem really frustrated.” Or, “I can tell you are really upset about this.” You do the same thing with the Command. If your spouse says, “Knock it off!” or “Grow up!” The response should be something like, “I can tell that you are really upset.” or, “You seem really angry about this.” CAUTION: If you are sarcastic or demeaning in anyway, you are being manipulative and hurtful. This will just make a bad situation worse. So, be real and trust the process.

5. Pause or moment of silence: Without trying to rush the process, when there is a short break in the dialogue, usually after they have said their criticism and you acknowledged the element of truth, this is your chance to ask a question. For example: You can ask: “Do you want to know why I was late today?” Don’t ask, “Can I tell you why I was late today?” There is something dynamically different in the two questions. One asks for the person’s interest in an explanation and the other asks permission. You don’t want permission to speak. You want them to want to know.

If your partner makes another **criticism** continue to “Kill” the criticisms until he/she asks a question, makes a declaration or a command. If there is a laundry list of criticisms that are all true, the reality is that there may be a lot of reason to their frustration and criticism. So, you better just buckle down and deal with it, because you deserve it. If there isn’t any truth to the barrage of criticisms, refer to chapter 2.

To get to a point where mutual understanding can take place you want the critical person to ask a **question**. You want them to ask a question so you can explain how they have misjudged your actions or intentions. Because the truth is, you had no intentions of causing problems. In order to assist the criticizer to move from being critical to quizzical you need to “Kill the Criticisms” carefully and specifically. Any premature volunteering of an explanation will not be heard – it will be attacked. The criticizer must move out of attack mode into listening

mode and they need help. So, first you “Kill the Criticism.” If you do this successfully, you will invite a declaration, a command, a question, or pause from the criticizer. When they ask a question, they are moving into the listening mode.

Depending on how upset they are when they ask a question, you may need to help them transition more into the listening mode from the critical mode. In order to help them out of the critical mode when they are asking a question, we need to find out if they are ready to listen or if the question is just another criticisms disguised as a question. In order to find out, first, test the waters to see if they really want an answer “Do you really want to know?” If they say “no”, don’t waste your breath. If they say “yes”, and you think that this might be appropriate, you may want to use another question like “Is it O.K. if we disagree?” This question helps confirm that the other person is really going to try to listen to what you are saying and not jump all over your answer the first chance the criticizer gets.

A **declaration** is a general statement about the situation or a feeling he/she has. “The is a bunch of bull!” Notice that there is nothing specific being attacked. It is a reference to the situation. “I’m sick of this!” “This is going nowhere!” These are all examples of declarations. A **command** would be something like “Well, stop it!” “Do something different!” etc. If the verbal expression is a declaration, or a command, treat the statement the same. All you do is capture the emotion being expressed and verbally acknowledge it. When people make a declaration or command they are usually frustrated, angry, exhausted etc. “You seem really frustrated.” “ I can tell that you are very upset by this.” Sometimes a particular emotion is hard to define. So you can say something like, “This seems really important to you.” or “You seem really sure about this.”

Finally, if the person doesn’t know what to say after you have agreed with the truth of the criticism there may be a moment of **silence** or the **pause**. When you get the “pause,” and there will always eventually

be a pause in the interaction, this is where you ask the question. “Do you want to know why I ...?”

Note: Try to avoid saying “I’m sorry you feel this way”, or, “I’m sorry you took offense.” No matter how you say it, it will come across patronizing and add fuel to the fire. It is also a statement that when you really look at it, doesn’t make sense. How can you apologize for the other person’s emotional experience? You can apologize for what you did, not for someone’s feelings.

Another Note: There is one more strategy to help you. If you are criticized and the person being critical doesn’t switch a new criticism, and begins lecturing on the very criticisms that you admitted was true, they have fallen into the trap of communication catharsis. They are just venting. You can stop an un-needed lecture if you want to. As soon as you realize that the person is going on about the same thing, kindly interrupt the person by asking the person who is lecturing if they are Assuming Good Intent. This will stop the droning and disrupt the pattern. Taken off guard a little, the person lecturing will ask, “What do you mean, am I assuming good intent?” Then you can say, “Are you assuming that I don’t know that this bothered you or that I don’t care that this bothered you?” The person who was lecturing will most likely sum up what they were trying to say, with a brief explanation of their criticism and why their criticism was valid. At which point you can “Kill the Criticism” by reiterating what is true.

PRACTICE

1. Refer to the list of criticisms you have written in the section “Killing Criticism’s.”



2. Write out what you think the other might say. (For example identify if the response to the your validating statement would be another criticism, or question.

a) If it is another criticism, “Kill” it.

b) If you believe the person will ask a question, write out the question and then write, "Do you really want to know?" Then anticipate what the other might say. Remember the follow up question and use it if you need to, "Is it ok if we disagree?" This process will help the speaker transition to listener.

c) Is it a command, or declaration? Write a statement that captures the emotion being expressed.

Note: If it turns into a lecture, write out the question "Are you Assuming Good Intent. In other words are you assuming I want to make your life miserable, or I don't care about your feelings?"

Example:

a. Criticism - "You don't help out enough around the house."

Response: "There are times when I don't take the time to straighten things up after leaving a room, making sure the room is in order. And there are times when I don't clean up after myself when I start a project."



b. She would probably say something like: "Why don't you pick up after yourself more?" If I can tell that she is listening, I would answer the question. If I could tell that she was still upset, I would ask her if she really wanted to know. When she said "yes," then I would answer the question.

This process continues until the person is able to listen and you can then start moving toward resolution and solving the problem.

Note: If you think her response to your attempt to "Kill the Criticism" sparks a lecture, gently interrupt like this. (Wife lecturing) "You know it's just so frustrating when I've been cleaning the house all day and finish cleaning the kitchen and you start making another mess. It seems like there is always a dish in the sink or something is left out..." (Notice that the response is turning into a lecture. At this time she is just venting. As soon as you recognize this as a lecture – the criticism continues on the same complaint, start with acknowledging her frustration. "Honey, I can see that you are really frustrated right now. Are you Assuming Good

Intent?” She might respond with something like. “What do you mean?” You can then say something like “Are you assuming that I don’t care about your time and don’t appreciate how nicely you take care of the house?” At this point she is being really listened to, and the animosity or frustration may abate. Being a little more reasonable she will probably say. “I’ve just been really stressed today, and feel overwhelmed. I could really use your help today.” Or she might say something like. “Yes, I feel like you don’t appreciate what I do.” This would be a criticism and I would respond to the element of truth to the criticism.

Following the process is not easy. It takes practice. You will find that there are certain phrases that work better for you than others. The principles and practices are guidelines to help you discover what will work in your relationship. The principles as well as the structure has been presented, you may need to explore what techniques and phrases work best for you to really communicate in a way that creates closeness.

You Try! Here is a place where you can write out how you think the conversation will go. I would recommend using a notebook or your smartphone to help you write out your frustrations and explore how you can make changes to improve your communication. Start out with a criticism and go from there.





Commitment #7

Disarming Landmines

I can't begin to count how many times I have had couples in my office where one person says, "She just keeps bringing up the same thing over and over again. I'm tired of re-hashing things. Why can't we just move forward and let go of the past?" The other person says. "We never finish any conversation. The only reason it seems like I keep bringing the same thing up over and over again is because we never resolve it."

Disarming landmines resolves issues. There is no rehashing. In fact there is no hashing at all. Disarming Landmines uses the skills and abilities acquired through the application of the other six commitments of turning conflict into closeness. It trains you and your spouse to put the interests of each other above your own and see situations through the eyes of your partner. The process of Disarming Landmines builds trust, closeness, and emotional intimacy. Compared to the traditional way of resolving conflict (that usually doesn't work), this process is an enjoyable bonding experience.

There are 5 steps to Disarming Landmines.

1. Define the Landmine.
2. Instead of explaining why this situation or behavior bothers you, explain how your spouse see's the situation/behavior.
3. The other person then explains how you see the situation/behavior.
4. Write out your resolve to prevent the conflict from happening again.
5. The "other" writes their resolve to prevent the conflict from ever happening again.

Example: Husband comes home. When he enters the house he yells out in a friendly energetic tone “I’m home! Where is everyone?” Wife rolls her eyes, responds with coldness. “Why do you do that?” “You know how it annoys me.”

1. Define the Landmine: The form of the definition is stated like this. When Then ... In this example the husband identifies the landmine and states it like this. “*When* I come home from work and yell out to everyone that ‘I’m home, where is everyone’, *then* it really upsets you and you roll your eyes and shake your head at me instead of being happy to see me.

2. Define the perspective of the other.

(Husband identifies what wife experiences and why it bothers her, then checks in.)

“I’d like to see if I understand why you get upset when I come home and ask where everyone is. You are annoyed because, it seems that I am inconsiderate of others. For example, I’m not considering what might already be happening at home when I arrive. Maybe you are having a conversation with someone, or someone is trying to get some rest. Is that why it bothers you?”

(Wife responds still focused on part 2. “Yes!!! When you come home, you don’t stop to think if there is a visitor with a baby. It’s as if no one else in the house matters except you, and when you continue to do it, even after I tell you how upset I get, I feel totally unimportant! Plus, I really enjoy the peace and quiet of being home.”

(HUSBAND now reiterates what wife said in order to demonstrate that he truly understands her perspective. This part is very important and often overlooked.) “I don’t stop to think about anyone else but myself. So, underscore inconsiderate. And when I barge in all loud and obnoxious, I ruin the peace you were in. Right?”

(Wife) “Right.”

(Husband) “Is there something else I’m missing?”

(Wife) “No, that pretty much covers it.”

3. Wife tries to understand the perspective of the husband.

(Wife) “Let me see if I can understand your perspective. You come home after a hard days work. You want to be a part of what is going on in the house. You like knowing what everyone is doing and where they are. You are just trying to check in and then I give you a hard time when you do it. Is that right?”

(Husband responds) “Yes, It’s just... I am so excited to be home from work and spend time with the kids and be apart of their lives. Sometimes I just can’t help contain my excitement. I also want the kids to know I’m excited to be home.”

(Wife reiterates) “So you’re really not trying to be obnoxious you are just excited.”

(Husband) “Right.”

(Wife) “Is there anything I’m missing?”

This process will continue until both people feel understood. Not agreed with but understood.

4. Husband writes out his resolve.

The husband then creates a solution he can be responsible for to make sure the problem never happens again. He does it in a way that his solution will *single handedly* resolve the issue from ever happening. “I am going to check in with you to find out what is going on and where everyone is. After I check in with you, I will go around the house checking in with everyone. I can do this with a phone call on my way home or right when I get home.”

5. Wife writes out her resolve.

The wife follows the same process as the husband. She *independently* creates a solution that does not count on her husband doing what he is going to do. The type of solution – I’ll do this, if you do that, is a what’s

called a “quid pro quo.” She might decide something like: “When you get home, I will take a minute to greet you right as you walk in. I can check in with you to let you know what is going on and where everyone is. Or, I can give you a call at 5:30 pm when I know you are on your way home.”

Notice how both the husband and wife identify resolutions that are independent of the other. They aren’t relying on the other person to make the problem go away. They are taking personal action and responsibility to make the problem go away. If the problem ever came up again, it would mean that both of them individually failed. Although in real life this may happen, having both the husband and the wife take full responsibility for the solution will prevent them from blaming the other, because they are just as responsible for the solution.

Your turn:

1. Person A: Define the Landmine: (When this... then this...)



2. Person A: Write out why you think the other person’s perspective is on this issue:

Congratulations! You've completed the workbook! Use these communication practices and strategies in all of your relationships, and teach them to others. If you stay committed to following these principles and practices, you have a relationship that is better than you have ever dreamed!

Please share with me your experiences how you were able to use these principles and strategies to resolve issues and turn conflict into closeness in your life. Email me at emilharker@gmail.com. I'm also open for any suggestions or insights from you as I am devoted to learning and growing. Your feedback is what helps this program improve.

If you are reading this paragraph at the very end of the workbook, you are passionate about making marriage great. I invite you to help me on my mission to change marriages all over the country, one couple at a time. Send an email to your close family and friends and let them know you learned how to turn conflict into closeness. Invite them to experience what you've just experienced. If you would like more training on turning conflict into closeness or other strategies to make your marriage amazing, go to EmilHarker.com. You can also go to TheMarriageAcademy.com where you can find more workshops and training programs I support.

About the Author

You know the guy in high school that the girls would talk with to help them figure out how to deal with their boyfriends. That was me. Although I really wanted to be a chef when I was younger, I decided to change direction and pursue my passion for communication and relationships when I realized that the life of a chef would make it harder for me to spend time with my family. And although I love food, nothing



beats the feeling of helping people connect to the people that mean the most to them.

In the year 2000 I graduated from Utah State University with a MS degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Passionately driven to find a program of communication and conflict resolution that anyone can use, I created a program and produced the DVD “The 7 Commitments for Perfect Communication.” Since the completion of the program I have presented to numerous professional groups and private groups including fortune 500 companies and professional athletes. Over the past several years I have made changes to the original program and included these changes in my new book “You Can Turn Conflict Into Closeness” and its accompanying workbook.

Growing up in a family of 8 brothers (my poor mother) family has been an important part of my life. I have three boys and live in an ideal community for raising a family - Layton Utah. I have a private practice where I continue to study and learn. I still love to cook (and eat) which requires a decent amount of exercise which is important to me so I don’t blow up like a warm batch of bread dough.

As a side note I have serious ADD which has been a constant challenge to be focused and finish projects. Since the start of this program I have started several other books and projects that I can't wait to get to.

The one thing that makes this program make sense is my wife Teresa. She has been the fortunate and not so fortunate recipient of every single component of this program tested and retested. Without her, the program would not be what it is today, nor would I be the man I am today.