

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT--HOW TO LISTEN--HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS

1. Talk about anything in BORN-TO-WIN, or anything from your WRITTEN responses to the questions, discussion points, or exercises, at the end of the chapters.
2. What do you think, feel, believe and see in family album pictures.
3. What is important in a relationship? Feelings? Values? Behaviors? Why? How do you get that? Do you give that?
4. MAD - SAD - GLAD - SCARED (MSGS)
 - a. How did you express MSGS when you were a child? Which did you avoid? What about the last 5 years?
 - b. How did your parents express MSGS when you were a child? Which did they avoid? What about the last 5 years?
 - c. What do you and your partner need to learn about expressing MSGS now? What is the fear level for changing?
5. Where do you want to be in 1, 3, 5, 10, 20 years, in regard to changing or gaining new skills / advancements / growth:
 - a. Emotionally
 - b. Physically
 - c. Intellectually
 - d. Spiritually
 - e. Sexually
 - f. Financially
 - g. Educationally
 - h. Secrets
6. How would they get along if:
 - a. Your mother was married to your partner's father?
 - b. Your father were married to your partner's mother?
 - c. Your mom and your partner's mom were in business?
 - d. Your dad and your partner's dad were in business?
7. What do you and your partner compete for emotionally? Control? Secrets? Power?
8. What are 10 good rules for raising children in a healthy way? How many of those come from your parents? You?
9. What do you know about your parent's childhood problems / joys / secrets/shames/fears/pride/wins/losses?
10. What do you and your partner agree / disagree on? Why? Are those issues trivial or profound?
11. What do you and your partner withhold from each other? From other people? Are those secrets worth it?
12. If nothing changes; is this relationship acceptable to me as it is? Or what would have to change to become OK?

SOME IDEAS ABOUT LISTENING

1. "HE WHO ANGERS YOU, CONQUERS YOU." Two angry people are competing for who is "right" and who is "wrong". That contest will get nowhere except to ulcers.
2. "NEVER TRY TO TEACH A PIG TO SING, IT ANGERS THE PIG AND IT IS A WASTE OF YOUR TIME". Some people, maybe you, may not want to listen if "hot". You have to "drain the swamp" of emotions before you can begin building the solution.
3. FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM--NOT THE PERSON. Don't get dragged into a personal contest of who is right/wrong. Do not escalate your anger--It is not personal!!
4. REMAIN NEUTRAL. Do not give advice, agree/disagree, criticize or interrupt.
5. GIVE YOUR COMPLETE ATTENTION. Show interest, nod, give verbals, "yes", "uh huh", "I see", "I understand", "I know that must be difficult for you". Silent listening is unnerving for most people. They know you are listening if you give feedback.
6. ASK ABOUT THEIR STATEMENTS. Dig out information, invite them to tell you everything. "In addition to that, is there anything else?". "Could you say more." "Could you fill more details about that."
7. RESTATE THEIR MAIN POINTS. Let them hear their exact words restated by you. This prompts them to give facts, think intelligently, and let you know if you heard them correctly or misheard them.
8. PUT THEIR FEELINGS INTO WORDS. State what their feelings seem to be. When they hear them voiced, they may evaluate and temper them. PAUSE to give them an opportunity to digest your comments and respond more thoughtfully.
9. GET AGREEMENT. Summarize what you have both said ...encourage them to suggest the next step and plan a course of action that is problem solving.
10. BE FRIENDLY! BE WARM! You have been their shoes before, haven't you? A little compassion goes a LONG WAY!!

SOME IDEAS ABOUT QUESTIONS

1. NO THIRD DEGREE! Use quiet questions--no trapping, degrading, or "smart".
2. ASK "W" QUESTIONS. Who, What, Where, Why, When, & How questions get facts.
3. ASK QUESTIONS THAT INVITE THEM TO GO DEEPER. Get examples, more detail.
4. ASK "SUPPOSE" QUESTIONS. Introduce a new idea, examine an overlooked option for problem-solving. "What if we did it this way...?"
5. ASK THEM. Be direct. They may have a clear and simple solution if you get past their anger and discomfort. "Do you have a solution for this problem."

some excerpts from material supplied by Tice Elkins, L.C.S.W., Roseville, CA



OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.