

Repairing Your Communication Using the Gift of the Present Moment

The concept of mindfulness and its positive impact on mental and physical health is widely recognized. However, we should also consider how we can harness the power of the present moment to foster transformation and deepen our connection with our partner.

The present moment offers us an opportunity for radical honesty in our communication. Instead of hiding behind mental narratives about why things are a certain way or how we believe they should be, embracing the present moment allows us to express what is truly occurring.

Consider this scenario: You may find yourself wanting to verbally attack your partner. Simultaneously, you might notice your mind generating stories about your partner's inadequacies or your own perceived shortcomings. By acknowledging these thoughts and feelings and naming them in your communication, you create an opening for more authentic communication and potential growth in your relationship.

The present moment is rich with experiences that can inform our communication. Here are some more examples. We might be:

1. Holding back our tears because we feel sad.
2. Feeling overwhelmed by a mental to-do list.
3. Experiencing exhaustion or health-related anxiety that subtly influences our mood.
4. Craving our partner's attention while fixating on their apparent inattentiveness
5. Hesitating to speak up for fear of upsetting our partner or saying the "wrong" thing

These are just a few instances of the myriad of internal experiences we might encounter. By acknowledging and sharing these present-moment realities, we open the door to more authentic and meaningful exchanges with our partner.

This internal landscape, often left unspoken, can significantly impact our interactions. Bringing awareness to these experiences and expressing them honestly can transform our communication, leading to greater understanding and intimacy in our relationship.

Speaking in a way that is honest and transparent has the effect of creating energetic space in our relationship. Our partner is less likely to feel attacked and respond from a reactive energy. You will also be modelling healthy emotional expression and taking responsibility for what is coming up for you on a thought and feeling level.

The Present Moment: A Tool for Emotional Separation

Observing and articulating your current experience—your thoughts, feelings, and behavioural impulses towards your partner—creates a valuable distance from emotionally charged narratives. This practice of present-moment awareness allows you to:

1. Acknowledge your emotional state without being consumed by it
2. Validate your experience without indulging in stories of blame or despair
3. Avoid unnecessary conflict stemming from unchecked emotional reactions

By simply noting, "I notice I'm feeling frustrated and want to criticize," you create space between your immediate experience and potential reactive behaviours. This pause can be transformative, allowing for more thoughtful responses and reducing the likelihood of escalating tensions.

This approach enables you to honour your feelings while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of getting lost in narratives that may not serve your relationship's best interests.

Selective Sharing: A Balanced Approach to Communication

Should we voice every thought and feeling in the moment? The answer is generally no. Constant, unfiltered expression could overwhelm the relationship. Instead, the goal is to:

1. Notice your internal experiences
2. Take responsibility for your well-being
3. Communicate selectively and effectively

Observing your thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations is a powerful way to assume responsibility for your own state, rather than holding your partner accountable for everything you feel. Sharing these observations demonstrates this responsibility.

Examples of effective communication:

- "I'm noticing I feel stressed and am tempted to take it out on you."
- "I'm holding a lot of tension right now. I need to speak up, but I'm afraid. I am afraid that you might not listen to me or try to fix me." This gives your partner feedback as to what you need in that moment.

This communication style may feel unfamiliar at first and you will likely feel vulnerable. There is always going to be a part of us that fears being dismissed and not heard, because this has often been our experience in the past. Unfortunately,

there is no guarantee your partner won't react negatively, especially to start with. However, expressing yourself with full responsibility—without blame or criticism—increases the likelihood of your partner being receptive. If you both have access to this information again and you are both practicing being more open and honest with each other, it is also going to make the process easier.

Remember:

- It's okay to make mistakes; they're part of the learning process.
- Be discerning about whether your emotions stem from personal issues rather than your partner's actions.
- Sometimes one or both of you will get triggered and default into your usual patterns of conflict or avoidance. Here, we must allow space for any "shadow" to play out. Granted it is not comfortable, however you can always come back to each other and have another conversation where you can clarify any misinterpretations and ask for what you need.

If conflict occurs, view it as an opportunity for learning and discovery.

After an argument, you can again use your experience in the present moment to guide you:

"I'm feeling resentful right now. I notice I want to blame and attack you because I felt unheard when..."

This approach fosters honesty, self-awareness, and mutual understanding in your relationship.

Speaking from Your Values and Desires

Communicating from a place of desire, rooted in your values, can help shift the energy from negative to positive. Expressing how you would appreciate something or why you want a certain quality of connection and intimacy in your relationship is beneficial. Express these desires from a place of personal responsibility.

Examples:

1. "I want to show up at my best for myself, you, and our relationship/children. I value deep emotional connection and passion in my love life. I know I'm responsible for this too, and I don't always get it right. While I'm unsure how to make this happen right now, I know I need to focus more on self-care, energy management, and physical well-being. I understand you can't be there for me 100% of the time."

2. "I'd love more spontaneity, and I know I need to trust that we can both create this without pressure. I want to be more trusting, but sometimes I don't feel safe in our relationship. I know it's unintentional, and partly my own narrative. When I witness [specific behavior] between us, I end up feeling [emotion]."

These examples may seem lengthy, but they illustrate the concept. Using "I" statements rather than "you" statements helps maintain balance, even when addressing your partner's behaviour.

Your Partner's Communication Style

Remember, your partner doesn't need to communicate in exactly the same way as you. Your openness and honesty can help them access their emotions and thoughts more effectively. Avoid pressuring them with phrases like "Tell me what's happening to you right now." Let them know you are available if they want to talk and don't let things go on for too long without a conversation. Try to trust that they will open up when ready and lead the way with openness and honesty yourself. Remember: if you want a higher quality of conversation you might have to be the person who initiates to start with. Don't fall into the trap of thinking one conversation is sufficient – this is a manifestation of the child shadow archetype, expecting everything without realizing your responsibility in creating your vision.

Conclusion

The present moment offers numerous cues to navigate relationship challenges. Noticing recurring feelings aids self-reflection and responsibility. It uncovers deeper emotions and fosters authentic communication. When your partner senses this authenticity, they are more likely to move towards you rather than remain in self-preservation mode.

Maintain this practice of present-moment awareness and honest communication to foster a deeper, more fulfilling relationship.

It is also worth noting that there are certain nuances that pertain to a man and a woman when it comes to communication. I will address these later.