

Have you experienced attempting to communicate and found the conversation either did not meet your expectations or possibly swelled into an argument – an argument that again left you wanting? Our communication attempts fall short, especially with those closest to us, because we remain in our old, learned patterns of focusing on “the other”, telling them what they did, or said. Tell them what YOU are experiencing, stay with YOU, and watch things change. The example below offers guidelines only, to give you a taste of how to Speak Your Truth. Practice in a structured interaction first, maybe with a primary partner or friend willing to try. Over time the process incorporates into your daily interactions.

“When you said / did \_\_\_\_\_.”

*Repeat what the person said literally - try to use their words exactly, not your interpretation of their words.*

“I made up a story that you / it meant \_\_\_\_\_.”

*State your perception, interpretation, thought - tell the story you made up, the meaning you made.*

“Then I felt \_\_\_\_\_.”

*Share your feelings and emotions – use **feeling** words, not thoughts.*

Clear communication begins with getting out of the other person’s business and staying in your own. Once you go down the road of talking about (telling the other person) what “they” did or said, communication is lost. After all, they know what they did or said and you telling them only heightens their defenses. Communication can not happen while defenses are up.

*While all aspects of the practice are important, the sharing of your feelings is most significant, and often most challenging because even though we may think we are sharing feelings, typically, we are sharing thoughts or judgments we confuse with feelings. **Use the feelings below as a simple guide when attempting to label your feelings.***

ANGRY

AFRAID

JOY

PASSION

SHAME

HURT

LOVE

GUILTY