

SELF Management – Interpersonal Protocol

How to develop relational intimacy with my *Self* and with others moment by moment

INTERPERSONAL TRANSACTIONS (relational intimacy / connecting with others)

If necessary, I will present my need to other people (from my ADULT to their ADULT). In order to do so,

WHAT

- 1) I will first IDENTIFY what my (ADULT'S) need* is:
I will ASK my *Self* (i.e. my ADULT) something like “In terms of this situation, what do I need in order to feel happy, calm, fulfilled, whole and restore my happy *Self*?”
E.g.: “I would like my partner to let me know in advance when (s)he arrives late from work.”

* The need has to be POSITIVE. E.g.: “I wish to have...” or “I need you to help out with...” and NOT “I don’t want...” or “You need to stop...”, “You never do/say...”, “Don’t...”, etc. This is NOT the time for complaints, reproaches, criticisms, put downs, vagueness, games, jokes, assumptions, manipulation, sarcasm, dropping hints, etc. I need to remind myself that *one attracts flies with honey, not vinegar!*

The need has to be CONCRETE. E.g.: “Can you help me with the dishes hun?” and NOT “I need you to be a good partner”, which is way too general and meaningless in terms of a concrete action or change.

The need has to be PRO-ACTIVE. E.g.: “I need you to speak up when your parents put me down.” and NOT “You always let your parents walk all over me!”, whereas no need is actually expressed.

Expressing a need is about letting the other person know what would be useful, helpful, healthy, necessary for me, for our wellbeing or for my relationship with them. It is a means to get the other to COLLABORATE with me. Therefore, it is in MY BEST INTEREST to be on MY BEST BEHAVIOUR when stating MY need. The focus is ME and MY NEEDS: I need to talk about ME more than about the other.

Expressing a need is not about asking permission (supplicating?).

Expressing a need is not about giving (shouting?) out orders.

Expressing a need is not about manipulating (threatening?) the other.

Expressing a need is not about practicing emotional terrorism (e.g.: “If you loved me, you’d do x, y, z”)!

WHEN

- 2) I need to choose an appropriate TIME or MOMENT to express my need, make sure the other is available and open to hearing my need. I won’t make a request when the other is busy with a task, this includes watching TV, being at the computer, etc. If in doubt, I may simply ASK if this is a good time to approach them. If they say it is not a good time, I need to ask for a specific time when we can actually resume the transaction.

E.g.: “*Sweetie*, I need to ask you something. Is this a good time for you right now?

- Sorry, not now, hun. I really need to finish this document.

Okay, that’s fine. When can we chat *honey bunch*?” (and *not* “Let me know when you’re free” as it most likely and simply is not going to happen!)

WHERE

- 3) Location, location, location! Well, maybe not *that* important but location is an important factor. The location of the transaction needs to be safe and secure for all parties, and conducive to a fruitful relational interaction. For example, it's important that I don't bring a major need to the other when surrounded by others, may it be in public, at a large family gathering, or in a work setting where other parties that have nothing to do with my need are present, etc. If there is a chance that the other may feel shamed or exposed, where I am located may NOT be the best place (and time) to address my need.

HOW

- 4) When I communicate my need, I try to be as GENUINE and HONEST as possible. This is the time to be the most *truthful* and *transparent*. Scary... I know as I will have to show a vulnerable side of me to the other! Whoa!! Yikes!! I just need to remind my *Self*: no risk – no reward... and same ol', same ol'! ;-(
- 5) I now have to EXPRESS my need CLEARLY to the other. My need has to be CLEAR, CONCISE, TO THE POINT and REALISTIC (i.e. fairly easy to fulfill). And ONLY ONE NEED AT A TIME PLEASE!
E.g.: "Hun, would you open the lid on this jar?"; "Will you be able to take me to the dentist on Friday?"
- 6) I also need to POSITION MY SELF when I express my need, which means the very first word coming out of my mouth will most likely be "I"... as in "I need", "I want", "I would like", "I appreciate", "I enjoy when...", etc. It's VERY IMPORTANT that I use "I" statements as much as possible! This is tricky, I know. E.g.: "I want to go see E.T. Would you like to join me?" And not: "Do you want to go to the movies?" as this is a real set up! The other will check with themselves, and if they don't want to go, they have to say "no"! My question has nothing to do with MY own needs... hence a total set up for failure on MY part!
- 7) It is IMPERATIVE that I express to the other THE REASON WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT FOR MY NEED TO BE MET. It is in my best interest to let the other know how either 1) it makes me feel not to get my need met (i.e. complaint) or even better 2) how it would make me feel to get my need met with THEIR HELP. I am fully aware that I need to get the other to COLLABORATE with me, to get them on board with me as much as possible. When I express my needs clearly and the reason behind it, it actually provides the other an opportunity to COLLABORATE WITH ME and FEEL GOOD about themselves as they will feel PROUD, COMPETENT and FULFILLED in their interaction with me (= personal and relational GROWTH).
E.g.: "Hey, *sweetie*, when you have to work overtime, *can* you text *me* ahead of time to let *me* know? That would be *really sweet* and would make *me* feel *so good* as *I* would not have to worry for nothing. How does that sound, *honey bunch (or sweetie pie! ;-)*?"
INSTEAD of "You're always late! Like I don't even matter to you! You're so selfish! I have no clue why you're still with me! What's the point!? It's always about YOU and YOUR NEEDS! Bleep! Bleep! There's no space for me in this relationship! I was so much happier without you! (OUCH! OUCH!! and OUCHER!)
- 8) Other HEALTHY, ASSERTIVE and COLLABORATIVE WAYS of presenting my needs:
 - a) It's so nice when you... (e.g.: ...talk to me in a soft tone). It makes me feel good.
 - b) It would be great if you/we... (e.g.: ...could go to the beach this afternoon.) What do you think?
 - c) I would like to... Would you like to join me?
 - d) Sweetie, I would like to... How about you?
 - e) Sweetie pie, I would like that you... Are you up to it?
 - f) Honey bunch, I would really like if... Would you like this as well?
 - g) It would make me so happy if I/you/we... What's your take on this?
 - h) I would appreciate... Are you ok with this? Etc.

- 9) One easy method to present my need is to use the “W.I.N.” MODEL
- a) **W**hen you + action (I need to be descriptive so that both of us would agree on my statement)
E.g. “When you arrive late for dinner...” (and not “When you act like a jerk!”)
 - b) **I** + emotion (the focus is the emotional impact on me: *when you do this, this is what happens to me*)
E.g.: “...I become anxious and worried.” (and not “You piss me off!”)
 - c) **N**eed (I have to express a clear, concise, proactive and achievable need or request)
E.g.: “I would like it very much that you text me ahead of time and let me know you’ll arrive late.”
- 10) Oh, I almost forgot! I absolutely have to SEAL THE DEAL to increase the chances for my need to be fulfilled!
- a) I need to conclude the transaction with a “RELATIONAL CONTRACT” to ensure as much as possible that MY need will be FULFILLED and understood by the other. In other words, I need to verify that the other party agrees with my proposal. I CAN’T ASSUME THEY’VE UNDERSTOOD MY NEED. I have to get an agreement or establish a “contract” with them.
E.g.: “Sweetie, will you text me to let me know when you’ll arrive later than usual?”
 - b) I might also want to check with the other if what I am proposing makes sense to them (because if it doesn’t, whatever I’m asking simply won’t take place!)
E.g.: “Does my request make sense to you, honey bunch?”; “Are you ok to do this for me, sweetie?”

WHY

- 11) IF I DON’T EXPRESS MY NEEDS, there is ZERO (zippo!, nada!, zilch!, diddly-squat!) chances for my needs to be fulfilled. Makes sense, no? However, if I do express my needs, there is at least a 50 % chance that they will be fulfilled. And if I express them in a clear, concise, engaging and respectful way, there’s an even better chance that they will be fulfilled hence making my *Self* happy... and the other feel proud and competent! I know... it sucks that I even have to express my needs! That’s just part of being an ADULT.

You know how the old saying goes: “If at first, you don’t succeed, you need to try and try again” ...until the cycle of collaboration (and love!) is fully established! The concept of neuroplasticity (i.e. the ability to change my brain, and that of the other!) applies here. It takes time for lasting change to take place.

In the end, it is MY RESPONSIBILITY (and mine alone!) to ensure that MY needs will be met. I NEED (and ONLY I NEED) TO EXPRESS MY NEEDS ON A REGULAR BASIS. I am normally not surrounded by clairvoyants who can read my mind, right? Therefore, it is in MY best interest to present MY NEEDS in a CLEAR and ENTICING way so that the other will WANT TO COLLABORATE with ME.

- 12) Finally, I need to THANK the other EACH TIME they fulfill my needs and COLLABORATE with me. In other words, I need to POSITIVELY REINFORCE their behaviour... so that way I can GET MORE OF WHAT I WANT or NEED and less of what I don’t want or need.

Makes sense? Still unsure...? Well, let’s give it a try! We have nothing to lose... and everything to gain: i.e. OUR NEEDS BEING (FINALLY) MET!! Oh, and what a feeling! Welcome to the beginning of a happier life... as it was truly meant to be!

§



EXPRESSING MY NEEDS / Getting (ME and) the OTHER to COLLABORATE with ME WORK SHEET and GUIDELINES

WHAT

1. I IDENTIFY what MY NEED is in a POSITIVE way (i.e. what is missing right now so that I can be happy?)

WHEN

2. I choose an appropriate TIME when to express my need; if in doubt, I need to verify with the other.

WHERE

3. I need to make sure the LOCATION is a safe and secure one that is conducive to relational intimacy.

HOW

4. I need to be as truthful, transparent and direct as possible.

5. I EXPRESS my NEED (only ONE need at a time):

- a) that is POSITIVE, CONCRETE and PRO-ACTIVE,
- b) in a CLEAR, CONCISE and TO THE POINT manner,
- c) by bringing the FOCUS on ME and POSITIONING my Self (i.e. using "I" statements)

I would like _____

It would be nice _____

Sweetie, I would appreciate _____

- d) by letting the other know why it is important for my need to be fulfilled (= emotional impact on me!)

- e) Alternatively, I may use the WIN Model

When you (+ concrete action) _____

I (+ emotion) feel/felt _____

I Need _____

6. I SEAL THE DEAL by establishing a "RELATIONAL CONTRACT" and VERIFYING the validity of my need:

Do you think you can _____ ?

Will you _____ ?

Does my asking you to _____ make sense to you?

WHY

7. In short, if I don't express my needs, the fact is that there is a good chance (99 %) they won't be fulfilled. By expressing them, I increase my chances exponentially... and even more so if I follow the preceding healthy relational guidelines. In the end, it is MY RESPONSIBILITY –and mine only– to ensure that MY needs are MET and FULFILLED. Period!

8. Last but not least, I THANK and REINFORCE the other (and MYSELF!) whenever my needs are met!
I felt so happy when you _____ and I thank you for that! [muah!!]

I can now carry on with my day (life?) and enjoy it the way it was intended to be when it comes to my NEEDS BEING MET!

