Faulty Belief: We Must Talk, Especially About Our Feelings, to Rebuild Love and Trust

**Groundhog Process**

**Step #1**

**Identify the Problem**

Take a couple minutes to reflect on or write out your responses to these questions:

1. To what degree do you believe you must talk to rebuild your marriage or relationship?

   - We must
   - Not that important
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]

2. What images or thoughts come to mind when you think of talking to your spouse, especially about feelings?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

3. What type of feeling do you get when you think of talking to your spouse?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

4. What does it mean for you that you must talk, especially about your feelings, to rebuild your marriage?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

5. What is your level of comfort when you think of talking, especially about your feelings:

   - Comfortable
   - Uncomfortable
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
   - [ ]
Another trap for couples attempting to rebuild a hurting marriage is to believe they must “talk” through their problems or “talk” about solutions and in that process find their way to a new relationship.

Let’s take a closer look at this perceived need to talk through marital problems or the concept that a couple must “get feelings out” and talk about them for healing and health to exist.

Please consider these assumptions and misconceptions about “talking” as a road to healing:

1. “Talking” is often perceived as a means to an end. The ultimate desired end is not merely talking but effective communication. Further down the need scale is the desire to be deeply emotionally connected to someone. “Let’s talk about this” means, in essence, I want you to know me and I want to know you better. I want to feel closer to you. I want to experience that emotional connection, that closeness.

2. That emotional connection or closeness can happen WITHOUT talking. A look, a facial expression, a glance, a touch or a warm movement of the body may “connect.” I prefer to use the word engage rather than talk. I want to engage you.

3. One spouse is always more of a “talker” than the other. One most often relies upon verbal acumen to get what s/he wants, make a point or move the relationship or other person in a specific direction. The “non-talker” may feel inadequate verbally which often leads to a one-down position in the relationship which precludes the development of intimacy or a desired emotional connection. The non-talker may also control with his/her non-talking.

4. The one who wants to talk often is the pursuer. S/he is attempting to cope with and move toward getting a specific set of personal needs met. S/he may feel more desperate in getting his/her her personal needs met or may be more fearful of impending pain in the relationship (or lack of it.)

5. Talking often serves as a fertile ground for triggering upset. If words can’t kill, they can certainly trigger negative thoughts and feelings. What one says, how one constructs his/her words, the tinge of judgment or accusation in a word, although not intended, may quickly and powerfully destroy any positive momentum and good feelings in the relationship. Words are a powerful trigger.
6. The “talker” often comes from his/her personal need system or neediness, looking to take or receive and not give. The other spouse quickly picks up on this and usually withdraws, attacks, explains or defends.

7. “Talking” may have the purpose of persuading. The “talker” may have a rigid expectations of what a marriage and whom his/her spouse should be and the “talking” is an effort to persuade the spouse to meet those expectations and create a marriage or relationship according to the “talkers” ideas. This may seem reasonable (since most talkers are reasonable) to the other spouse, but that spouse out of confusion or reluctance, doesn’t buy in.

8. We need to “talk” may mean, “I need to tell you how you must change, what is wrong with you or how you are not acting appropriately in this marriage. It’s scolding time. “Talking” is often focused on the other person; what s/he is or is not doing, feeling, thinking, etc.

9. “Talking” may be used to maintain distance. A couple “talking” does not necessarily mean they are engaging at a meaning and significantly intimate level.

10. Some process, grow and learn better through thinking and silence. Silence may be more powerful in generating healing than “talking.”

I hope it is obvious that “talking” is not always a panacea. I’ve discovered over and over again in my private practice and coaching that a reluctant partner who talks, and thereby acquiesces to the desire of the other person to get it out, does so in ways that continue to avoid the truth of the relationship and self.

Sometimes it is best NOT to talk. And effective talking or what I call engagement can happen only under particular circumstances and when other business is first addressed.

Reflection:

Which of the above distinctions speaks most powerfully to what your experience in working on the marriage?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What has this been like for you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
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Groundhog Process

Shifts to Implement

In the next step of the Ground Hog Process you begin to make the mental shifts that you will place you on a more productive and effective path to marriage and love construction or reconstruction.

The constructive belief may not make full sense to you at this point. However as you proceed through the rebuilding steps you will see and experience the validity and power of each constructive belief.

Take a couple moments to place a checkmark in the box that most closely fit where you are now relative to the two opposing beliefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destructive Belief</th>
<th>Check what you believe now</th>
<th>Constructive Belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We need to talk.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I want to engage my spouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking will produce the result I want.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes I can connect with a touch, look or even silence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We must talk about our feelings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I desire an emotional connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must talk to get my point across.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can express my position, maybe without talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking gets me into trouble.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can constructively express myself without judgment or criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must talk to get him/her to understand me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I want to understand him/her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've always talked to get what I want.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can explore different ways of getting my personal needs met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've always got what I wanted by not talking.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can explore different ways of getting my personal needs met.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step #3
### Faulty Belief

We Must Talk, Especially About Our Feelings, to Rebuild Love and Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can’t help the way I respond when we talk.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I MUST talk. I can’t keep quiet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our talking goes in circles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I can control myself.
- I can listen.
- It's possible to emotionally connect.

If you want to take this a little further:

List other shifts you would like to make:

- →
- →
- →
- →
- →
- →
You engage you. You don’t engage the other.

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be a significant shift. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

Reflect on and Answer these questions:

I will be most aware of these new distinctions and/or shifts at this time and place during the next day.

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Reflect on and Answer these Questions:

Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.

Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.

Remember, you are just beginning. Don’t be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.

Employing the Ground Hog Process for most takes a number of attempts. It gradually will become part of you. And, when it becomes part of you, you will have it for life.

These questions will help you evaluate your experience:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as ________.

I notice this new thought coming to mind after the engagement.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I notice this new image coming to mind after the engagement.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
I notice this feeling ___________________________ located in this part of my body ___________________________ emerging after the engagement.

I now think this of myself after the engagement.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________