

DEALING WITH CRITICISM

4 Principles for Gleaning Information Contained in Criticisms

1. Consider that some of your partner's criticisms of you have some basis, and can be considered realistic. If you can force yourself to not be so defensive, but think about the possible truth of the criticism, you can experience an opportunity for growth, healing, and freedom. You might also discover a significant dis-owned trait.
2. Consider that your repetitious emotional criticisms of your partner may be disguised statements of yourself, of your own unmet needs.

Exercise

Write down the criticism of your partner on a piece of paper and then ask yourself the following:

- How do I feel when my partner acts this way?
- What thoughts do I have when my partner acts this way?
- What deeper feelings might underlie these thoughts and feelings?
- Did I ever have these thoughts and feelings as a child?

By going through this process you might discover that your partner's behavior is bringing back strong memories from childhood.

3. Some of your emotional repetitive criticisms of your partner may be an accurate description of a disowned part of yourself. This requires a great deal of soul searching.
4. Some of your criticisms of your partner can help you identify your lost self. When we complain about areas in our partner's life - we may be describing underdeveloped and or repressed areas in our own life.

Examining criticisms of your partner is an excellent way to gather information about yourself.

Stretching Exercise

Each partner develops a list of requests which the other is free to honor or not. In this case the list is for difficult areas for change in behavior, not for simple pleasurable interaction. Each area would focus on a point of contention. *Key is to examine deeply your criticisms seeking the desire that you want.* You want to isolate the desires hidden within the criticism, within the frustration. Then you can convert the desires into specific behaviors that will help satisfy the desire.