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“God gives us a Spirit of Power (Ability), Love & Self-Discipline (Control)” 1 Tim 1:7
“Everything is Possible for Those who Believe” Mark 9:23

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS ≈ 5 A's & 5 Choices

ATTITUDE / LOVE / PERSPECTIVE

Ultimate Attitude: Love ≈ Respect ≈ Humility ≈ Honesty ≈ Value

Be: Calm ≈ Cool ≈ Collect **Be:** Wise ≈ Effective ≈ Reasonable ≈ Flexible ≈ Adaptive

3 Part Dance: Assert Self ≈ Acknowledge Other ≈ Admit Responsibility

Understanding & Empathy: Seek to Understand & Be Empathic ≈ Seek to Be Understood

AWARENESS / MINDFULNESS / EMOTIONS

Think - Be Attentive & Conscious: Of Self & Other & Process

Emotional Regulation: Be Attentive to the Dashboard of Your Soul

Check Pt: Be Attentive to How You Are Managing Your:

Needs ≈ Desires ≈ Motives ≈ Perceptions ≈ Beliefs ≈ Judgments ≈ Expectations ≈ Should's

Control: of Self, Not Other

ASSERTIVE / LISTEN

Assert: Express Your Feelings, Needs, Concerns, Issues Calmly & Clearly

Listen: Be Quick to Listen, Slow To Speak, Slow To Anger – *Don't Interrupt*

Seek Clarity: Of Other's Feelings, Meaning, Issues, Concerns

Consideration: Of Other's Thoughts, Feelings; Their Perceptions & Experience of You

Needs or Desires of Other: Ask

Time-Out: When Emotion Intensifies ≈ When Balance is Lost between Emotion, Reason, & Logic

Check Pt: Be Attentive to How You Are Managing Your:

Defense & Explanations: Denial ≈ Minimizing ≈ Excusing ≈ Rationalizing ≈ Projections

Trigger Words: You ≈ Always ≈ Never ≈ But ≈ Disagree

ADMIT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY / TRUST

ACKNOWLEDGE / VALIDATE / TRUST

THE HAND: Listen ≈ Consider ≈ Understand ≈ Validate ≈ Personal Responsibility ≈ Attitude
Assessment for Love & Trust and Stress & Pain:

If The Hand is A Mutual Experience Then There Will Be Love & Trust;

If The Hand is Not A Mutual Experience There Will Be Stress & Pain.

You Are Either Part of the Solution or Problem, Responsive or Reactive, Purposeful or Problematic, Effective or Ineffective, Connecting or Disconnecting.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS - 5 A's & 5 Choices

GOAL: Process & Dialog Effectively with Awareness of Self, Other, & Context.
Effective Process Helps Nurture Love, Trust, Decision Making & Healing.

You can Measure Progress on a Daily Basis according to following 5 A's & Choices

ATTITUDE / LOVE / PERSPECTIVE

Believe that you can Manage a Humble, Loving, and Respectful Attitude, Maintain Perspective, even in the midst of Pain, Stress, and Frustration.

It's easy to get short-sighted, generally meaning self-focused – Perspective is doing your best to stay aware of the Whole Picture.

Triggers

A relationship is a lifelong ebb and flow of cause and effect, which means you will both trigger each other at times, even simultaneously and unexpectedly, and usually unintentionally.

Triggers can be like turbulence from flying, can seem to come out of nowhere.

Learn to Manage Internal World of Defenses, Stress, Difficult Thoughts and Feelings *while* Focusing on the Other *while* Expressing Yourself Assertively.

Your Attitude Reflects.

If your Attitude is Proudful & Negative, you can Expect a Negative Outcome & Reaction.

If your Attitude is Humble and Positive, you can Expect a Better Outcome & Response.

We often React or Respond according to the Perceived Attitude of the Other, so do the Best you can to ensure a Loving Attitude.

3 Part Dance

With a Good Attitude you can learn to Be Assertive, Acknowledge and Admit your Responsibility *simultaneously* – this takes Skill and a lot of time and practice, so be patient with yourself and each other.

It's a *Juggling Act* for sure !!

Understanding & Empathy

Seek *First* To Understand & Be Empathic, Seek *Second* to Be Understood.

Understanding will lead to Needed Change.

Understanding comes in 3 parts:

1. Understand what you did to Trigger the other;
2. Understand how the other felt by your Trigger;
3. Continue to Understand & Unfold whatever else is being experienced between you both.

You Both have Valid Perspectives; You Both Think what you Think and Feel what you Feel for Reasons.

The Need is to Make Sense and Understand why you both Think & Feel as you Do in order to Problem Solve & Make Decisions; you *Can't Change & Solve What You Don't Understand*.

An Empathic Heart Strives to Understand the Pain & Stress Underneath the Issues and Concerns.

Recommended Reading from this website:

Self-Skills–Boundaries – (for further Elaboration of Needs / Desires / Motives / Perceptions / Beliefs / Judgments / Expectations / Should's)

Think - Be Attentive & Conscious

Yes, *Think Well* – Think & Meditate upon these 5 A's – the more you do the More they will become a part of you.

Stay Attentive to the Flow of Dialog & Emotional Climate.

Learn to Be Sensitive to the Dialog – is the Dialog staying Connected or Becoming Disconnected.

Learn to Call Process when you Sense a Disconnect; somewhere along the process *The Hand* is breaking down (see bottom of article).

Stay Attentive to your Delivery (Manner, Tone, Words, Attitude); your Delivery can be Triggering if you are not careful.

Emotional Regulation

Emotions are as Real as the Weather.

Emotions are Neither Right nor Wrong, nor do they Lie – they are a Powerful & Profound Form of Personal Truth & Reality.

Emotions are Indicators of your Internal & External Experience.

Your level of Self-Awareness and Self-Control Reflects How Well you Understand and Manage your Emotional Experience.

How Well you Both Understand each other Emotionally will Reflect your Level of Intimacy and Trust, and will also Reflect your Potential to Problem Solve and Make Important Decisions.

You Can Not Problem Solve Well if you Do Not Understand each other's Feelings, Issues, and Concerns.

Learn to be Aware of and Manage Emotions especially when a conversation begins to heat up — if you don't learn to Pay Attention and Catch yourself early enough an argument can arise quickly.

Without being attentive to your feelings, it is easy to slip into Blame; when you are into Blame-Mode you Lose Perspective and See the other as the problem.

Be sure you are in a Calm and Thoughtful space before launching into an important conversation.

Interactions are very Personal & can become very Emotional.

Learning Emotional Regulation is like Walking on Ice for the first time in your life.

If you were walking on a trail and approached a frozen creek you needed to cross over in order to get to the other side, think about how Slow and Careful you would be stepping on the ice, and how Conscious you would be with each step – it's similar to sensitive conversations – you will probably be more successful if you are Careful & Patient & Conscious.

Words Can Be Very Powerful - they can either Build Up or Tear Down.

Recovery can take a long time; why Motive & Attitude is Critical.

“The exact words that you use are far less important than the energy, intensity, and conviction with which you use them” - Jules Rose

Learn to Balance Emotion with Reason & Logic.

When Emotions Rule, Reason, Logic, Understanding, & Perspective can be Compromised or Lost.

When Reason & Logic Rule, Intimacy can be Compromised.

All Interactions Are Personal.

Problematic when you fall into Attack-Defend & Judge-Justify modes.

Problematic when you *Personalize* what the other person is expressing; this can be when you *make it all about you*.

Personalizing is taking it to the Extreme, believing something is Wrong with you Or that it's all your Fault Or you are making it all about you.

You may have said something hurtful or did something harmful, but that does not mean something is completely wrong with you nor is it All your Fault.

Personalizing can prevent you from Understanding what the other is trying to convey about their self or you.

Learn to Receive Feedback Constructively as you can Benefit & Grow.

Sometimes what is expressed is a Projection of the other.

Sometimes what is expressed can be Valid both of Self and Other.

Control

You can only Control your self – not the other.

We have Ability to Control not only our Words and Behaviors, but our Manner & Tone.

Serenity Prayer.

Recommended Reading from this website:

Mindfulness - Mindfulness A's & F's for Process

Mindfulness - Mindfulness and the Full Catastrophe

Mindfulness - Acceptance & Willingness

Emotions - Processing Difficult Thoughts & Emotions

Emotions - Emotions as Messengers

ASSERTIVE / LISTEN

You Learn to Be as Clear as Possible Expressing Your Needs & Desires.

You Learn to Listen & *Not Interrupt*.

You Learn to Be as Clear & Calm as Possible Expressing your Issues and Concerns as to Why you Think and Feel as you do.

Be Sure you have Control & Ownership of yourself *Before* you Express anything otherwise your conversation could become Problematic.

Be Careful that your Motive & Focus is Constructive & Purposeful otherwise it's easy to Attack or Complain.

Easy to be more concerned about getting your point across than caring for what the other has to say.

Learn to Focus on the Issue & Not the Other.

Stay Attentive to your Internal Experience while Maintaining Attention to the other.

You Learn to *Respond* more than you *React*.

Don't Minimize – Don't Catastrophize.

Be Confident to express your Feelings, Thoughts, Needs and Desires – *as thoughtful as possible.*

Be Open to *Reconsidering* your Beliefs and Perspective.

Give and Receive Compliments.

Be Constructive with Feedback without anger or defense.

Let your body language reflect Openness and Warmth.

Listen

Listen – *Listen* – and *continue* to Listen with The Goal of Understanding and Being Able to Express What you are Understanding.

This requires Practice, Patience, and Focus.

Strive to Listen More & Speak Less.

Be Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak, and Slow to Anger / React - James 1:19.

Clarity

Seeking to get *Clear* on the Intention, Meaning, Issues, Concerns, Needs, Wants, Expectations, Perceptions, and Feelings of Both of You.

“So what I hear you saying is... Is this accurate?” “Is this what you mean?”

It’s ok if you don’t understand, or if it doesn’t seem clear.

Learn to make *Comments* or ask *Questions* until you gain Understanding and be able to express, “*that makes sense.*”

Consideration

Consideration here is not just about each other’s Feelings and Points of View – it has to do with Hearing how you are Perceived and Experienced by the other.

We Perceive each Other’s Feelings, Agendas, Motives, etc.

Sometimes We have a Need to say what is bothering you about the other’s behavior.

The Ultimate of Consideration is to be Open to what the other has to say about you, and the manner in which this is done is critical.

If this can be done in a Thoughtful Manner and Defenses minimized you can Benefit Significantly.

Therefore you Need to Hear what the Other has to Say *About You*.

Needs / Desires of Other

Find out what the other Needs or Desires; “Do you need feedback?”

Do you just need me to listen?

Do you need a hug?

Please make clear to me what you need or want.”

Needs / Desires Can and Do Change.

Time-Out

Time-Out is Necessary when it becomes Very Emotional, either very upsetting or very angry.

Time-Out is necessary when you’ve lost Balance of Emotion, Reason, and Logic, and when you are sensing Attack-Defend and Judge-Justify modes.

You Need to Regain Calm so you can Regain Perspective & Understanding of the other.

DURING Time-Out do some deep breathing, give yourself permission to experience and understand your feelings, check your Ego, and yet you need to reflect and be able to understand where the other is coming from too.

DO NOT RETURN from a Time-Out until you are willing to give understanding to the other.

Taking Time-Outs prevents resentment and unnecessary pain building up; you need to establish Trust that you will return to the conversation when ready – sooner than later.

It can be good to practice Time-Out from time to time as it can be easy to get very Confused, Overwhelmed, Frustrated and Tangled Up.

Defense & Explanations

Defense Mechanisms are Denial, Minimizing, Excusing, Rationalizing, and Projecting.

Too much Defense & Explanation Inhibits Problem Solving and Growth.

It’s Normal to want to Explain and Defend yourself which can reflect your need for Justification, or possibly being more concerned about getting your point across than caring what the other has to say.

Explaining yourself is important because you Need to be Understood – learn to hold on to what you Need to say and Remain Focused on the other.

Trigger Words

You, Always, Never, But, Disagree.

ADMIT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY / TRUST

Admitting and Taking Responsibility for Your Part in the Problem is the Hallmark of Responsibility & Trust.

You know you can Trust someone when they Own their Responsibility and Understand the hurt they have Caused in you or others.

When you Own your Responsibility, the more Effective you will be in Contributing to The Solution; You are either part of The Problem or The Solution.

The Problem is Not the Problem – The Problem is how you Cope with the Problem.

We are All Problematic at times; we Need the Grace to Remember we are Fallible Creatures.

In every scenario we could have played our part differently and more effectively.

Problematic if you generally Believe the Other is more at fault than you; this is a recipe for Conflict, Tension, and Misery.

Depending upon how many years you've been married will reflect how established your Relational Patterns are.

It took time for *Both* of you to Create your Patterns and it's going to take time for *Both* of you to Re-Create Healthier Patterns.

The Good News is that a Change of Pattern is Possible.

ACKNOWLEDGE / VALIDATE / TRUST

Validating is Valuing the other's Point of View, Thoughts, Perspective, Feelings, etc. with Genuine Understanding, Care, Regard, and Interest, all of which helps to nurture Trust

Do your best to let the other know you Care & Understand them as Best as possible.

It's ok if you don't Understand, once again this means you need to either ask questions or make comments until Understanding is gained.

Important to note that Validation is Not about Agreement or Disagreement; you can still Validate and Acknowledge even though you have a hard time of why the other thinks and feels as they do.

More times than not, expressing Disagreement can be Invalidating of the other's feelings, point of view, etc.

It's normal to have differences of opinions, perspectives, etc.

CHECKLIST TO MEASURE PROGRESS

The HAND: Listen ≈ Consider ≈ Understand ≈ Validate ≈ Personal Responsibility ≈ Attitude

Do you *Choose* to **Listen** to Others *as well as Yourself* ?

Do you *Choose* to **Consider** Other's thoughts, feelings, etc. *as well as Yourself* ?

Do you *Choose* to **Understand** Others *as well as Yourself* ?

Do you *Choose* to **Validate** Others *as well as Yourself* ?

Do you *Choose* to **Take Personal Responsibility** for yourself and for your **Attitude** ?

Do you *Choose* to Be **Responsive** or Reactive ?

Do you *Choose* to Be **Purposeful** or Problematic ?

Do you *Choose* to Be **Effective** or Ineffective ?

Do you *Choose* to Be **Part of the Problem** or Part of the Solution ?

Do you *Choose* to Be In **Control of Yourself** or *attempt* control of Others ?

To the Degree you Experience the above is the Degree of Love & Trust you will Have.

The Goal is To Be in Process For Progress & Growth, Not Perfection.