

Safe Communication in Relationships

Even in good relationships there are occasions when people can feel distant, misunderstood, alone, and unloved. Why would that happen? Initially we are attracted to people with whom we have an intrinsic comfort level. There is something about them that makes our unconscious brain recognize them as someone who can meet our needs.

Partners usually have great intentions at the beginning of a relationship. They imagine that it will be natural to meet their partners' needs because their partner so naturally meets needs for them. Enter real life: in real life there are bills to pay, dishes to wash, children to care for and jobs to be attended to.

None of us get taught how to communicate in relationships so instead of being able to talk about what we need from one another we interact in ways that cause our partner to react with either fight or flight. A safe dialogue is critical to continued understanding which leads to willingness to meet our partners' needs.

A safe dialogue is one in which the messages are sent without criticism, blaming or shaming. The message is sent with the sender taking responsibility for their own feelings and thoughts. When messages are sent in this way your partner can hear and understand your needs without getting defensive and this will allow them to carry through in giving you what you need. If you're having difficulties practicing safe and effective communication get coaching from a relationship professional.

Submitted by Linda Miller-deBerard LCSW 1/20/2009