



CHANGE YOUR VIBE

Ideas on Healing Relationships

Working on healing relationships, whether at home or at work is a big step. It can sometimes be scary or challenging, but ultimately it can make life a better experience. So, let's put our grown ups pants on and have a look at how we can create a better life for ourselves and others.

Your Attitude is Paramount

Intention – your motive for change - is more important than the actions you take toward the change itself. The reason behind this is that if we are changing in order to please someone else, or manipulate them into doing what we want, we will ultimately fail. Most people have good bullshit detectors that alert them to unconscious agendas. That means, most people sense when they are being used for another's needs or wants. Therefore, how to think differently about a problem is often more effective than just trying to figure out what action to take.

Accept that both of you will have limits as to how you can respond to each other in the moment. This awareness is a huge breakthrough in reaching relational maturity. Thinking about what stops us from doing the right thing can be ground-breaking in removing old habits and finding new ways to respond.

Be aware also that both of you operate in your own internal worlds. How you see and think about the world is different from others, and in turn, they think and see the world differently from you. Knowing this means we can be aware that our assumptions of the meaning of others' behaviour can be faulty, as their assumptions of us can be faulty. You can get clear about this by asking the other what their intention/motivation for a particular behaviour was, rather than making a faulty assumption and creating a drama.

Stay in Your own Business

In her book *Loving What Is*, Byron Katie says that the cause of our suffering is always about not accepting reality. Whining, begging, nagging or pleading for someone else to change is never pretty and just creates huge amounts of stress for not only the both of you but the people you gossip/complain about each other with.

The trick is to stay out of other people's business: The more you believe the other person should be different, the less initiative you will take to change the patterns between you. However, if you look toward your own feelings, beliefs, values and behaviour, you can identify the bits in your world view that could do with some tweaking. It's interesting to note that often when we change our own habits, prejudice or bad behaviour, other people start to treat us differently and our relationships improve. The hardest part of healing relationship is accepting you will need to improve your thinking

and behaviour toward a problem. Initially, people resist focusing on improving their response. It's more common for them to build a strong case for why the other person should do the improving.

It's easy to be considerate and loving to another person when life is going swimmingly, but when you are stressed, tired or just plain grumpy that's when you get tested. At those times, jumping the system and choosing whether to join the drama or remove yourself and work through your own process so that you can be the best version of yourself that you can is the practice you need to create change.

And here's the Paradox...

Conflict is inevitable in relationship. That is a given - It's never going to be perfect. Accepting that growth and healing comes from the times that you are fighting with the other person is the way toward forward movement in your relationship. Avoiding the fight and playing it safe doesn't necessarily mean it's a good relationship. If there's no disagreement then things get stale and boring. And if the relationship you are working on happens to be with your intimate partner – there's no make-up sex either!

Some Final Thoughts...

Sometimes when a relationship has been stressful, it's easy to focus solely on what has been wrong. Try to find things that are positive about the relationship and hold on to these while you are working on what could be improved.

In a relationship, there are three entities: you, the other person, and the relationship that exists between you. Sometime we do things for the relationship that we would not otherwise do for ourselves (he goes shopping with his partner, she watches the football game with him) this puts deposits the emotional bank balance of the relationship and creates a buffer for stressful times. The absence of this creates division in the relationship and does not demonstrate the positive regard required for the longevity of the relationship. However, doing this under a sense of obligation, rather than a spirit of love and goodwill ultimately leads to frustration and a sense of being victimised. If you cannot give without expecting a reward, don't give at all.

Remember: It's not all about you! But by the same token – it's not all about them either.

Be accountable: Trust is the foundation of a safe and fabulous relationship. You create trust by being and doing what you say you will do. Being transparent in the relationship also helps to build trust.

Most of the ineffective things we do in relationships fall into just a few categories:

- Blaming or attempting to dominate
- Disengagement / withdraw
- Resentful compliance
- Complaining / nagging
- Denial or confusion

These are the normal emotional reactions to experiencing some kind of threat or being under stress. Improving your relationship involves learning better management of these reactions.

Effective change requires insight plus action. Action without insight is thoughtless. Insight without action is passivity.

If you want to create a win-win solution, you cannot hold a position that has caused your partner to lose in the past.

Adapted from the work of Ellyn Bader PhD & Peter Pearson PhD. (www.couplesinstitute.com) and Ben Bennett (www.RelationshipCoaching.co.nz)

quickly add a benner

¹ Katie, B. (2002). Loving What Is. Ebury Press, London