

# **Helpful Relationship Strategies**

## **1 Shifting from Complaint to Request**

- a. Move from a *negative/past* to a *positive/future* focus. Don't criticise – ask!
- b. Make your requests specific, behavioural, and reasonable.

## **2 Speaking Out with Love and Savvy**

- a. Contract with your partner to engage in *the repair process*.
- b. *Remember love*.
- c. Use these four steps of *feedback*.
  - i. What I saw or heard
  - ii. What I make up about it
  - iii. How I feel about it
  - iv. What I'd like
- d. Let go of outcome; stay with the process.

## **3 Responding with Generosity**

- a. Listen to understand.
- b. Acknowledge whatever you can.
- c. Give whatever you can.

## **4 Empowering Each Other**

- a. Acknowledge the gifts the responder has offered.
- b. Ask what you might do to help the responder deliver.
- c. Acknowledge whatever you can and give whatever you can.

## **5 Cherishing**

- a. *Remember abundance*.
- b. Give your partner specific positive feedback.
- c. Nourish yourself and your relationship with time and energy.
- d. Practice *realistic generosity*.
- e. Use your strengths, talents and gifts.
- f. Give back to the world.

## **Unhelpful Relationship Strategies**

### **1 Being Right**

- a. Trying to *resolve* differences by eradicating them.
- b. Finding out whose view is most “valid” or “accurate.”
- c. Leads to endless *objectivity battles*.
- d. Fuels the *psychological violence* of self-righteous indignation.

### **2 Controlling Your Partner**

- a. Can be *direct* or *indirect* (manipulation).
- b. Short of outright coercion, control is an illusion.
- c. People don't like being controlled; payback is probable.

### **3 Unbridled Self-Expression**

- a. “I have the right and the need to share my feelings with you spontaneously.”
- b. The idea that all sharing is authentic and will increase closeness.
- c. Rarely engenders generosity in others.

### **4 Retaliation**

- a. Perverse justice; “Offending from the victim position.”
- b. Perverse communication; Trying to “make you feel what I feel.”
- c. Can be *explicit* or *covert* (passive-aggression).

### **5 Withdrawal**

- a. Differs from *responsible distance taking*.
- b. Stems from either resignation or retaliation.
- c. Often masquerades as mature acceptance.
- d. Always entails resentment.

## The Relationship Repair Process

### **Phase One: Speaking and Listening**

- 1- *Speak Out with Love and Savvy*
  - a. *Remember Love.*
  - b. *Use a Feedback process.*
- 2- *Listen with a Generous Heart*
  - a. *Contention becomes Curiosity*
    - Understand the internal logic partner's experience.
  - b. *Questions reduce when you accurately *reflect* and *empathise*.*

### **Phase Two: Responding with a Generous Spirit**

- 1- *Clarify* partner's wishes.
- 2- *Acknowledge* whatever you can.
- 3- *Give* whatever you can.

### **Phase Three: Empowering Each Other**

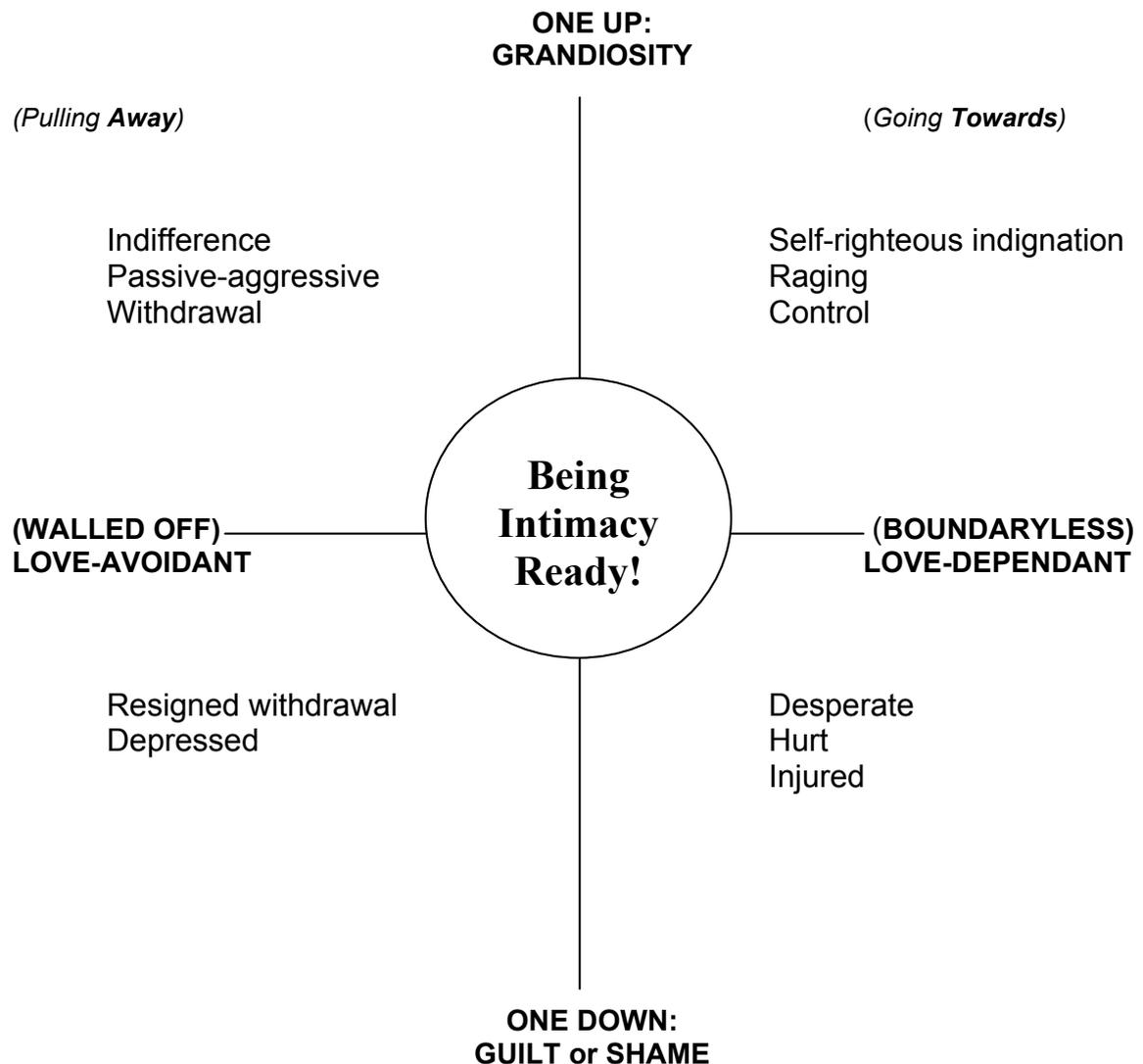
- 1- Switch roles:
  - a. *Speaker appreciates* & then asks how they might help their partner.
  - b. *Listener* makes a request.
  - c. *Speaker* acknowledges and gives.
- 2- Both: seal deal and appreciate.

### **Repair Process Mini Guide:**

<b>Speaker:-</b>	<b>1) Describe</b>	<b>2) Ask</b>	<b>3) Appreciate</b>	<b>4) Help Out</b>
<b>Responder:-</b>	<b>1) Listen</b>	<b>2) Clarify</b>	<b>3) Acknowledge</b>	<b>4) Give</b>

## **The Relationship Grid**

The Relationship Grid below outlines stances in the various quadrants. Healthy relationships occur at the centre, therefore, for example, a person in the upper left quadrant would need to come down from grandiosity and shift their boundary. Each quadrant requires a different combination of strategies to get into the centre.



Healthy relationships occur from the centre of this grid & is where each individual needs to go if wanting to be more relational.

## **Distress**

(a separate problem, a consequence, or an attempt at avoidance?)

- Alcohol or Drugs** Including prescription drugs.
- Workaholism** A sustained work week of 60 hours or more; and/or your sense of worth as determined by your performance.
- Love Dependence** Using the warm regard of someone outside the relationship to supplement both our own missing self-esteem and also the missing intimacy you crave. May lead to either sexual or emotional affairs.
- Sex** Includes porn; internet; one-night stands; paid sex; affairs - both physical and emotional; and inappropriate flirting.
- Food** Turning to food for psychological comfort or reward.
- Gambling** Includes irresponsibly reckless investing.
- Risk-Taking** And other unusually high intensity activities or situations.
- Spending** Overspending; compulsive shopping; finding missing vitality in buying.
- Television** A rampant form of self-medication.  
Soothing oneself with the passivity of watching.  
Vicarious enlivenment and company.
- Computer** Similar to television. May be an aspect of someone's sex addiction.
- Children** A particular example of love addiction. When your kids perform for you, parent you, or are your peers. When they supply you with the meaning, comfort, or company missing in your adult relationships.
- Exercise** Wonderful in moderation, may be used as an escape, as a needed "endorphin high," or as an aspect of love and/or sex addiction.
- Busy Addiction** Never allowing yourself to be still long enough to feel much or make real contact.

## **Core Negative Image (CNI)**

Core Negative Images (CNIs) are your fault lines and an extreme account of your *adaptive child* gone wild; they are an exaggerated version of you and your partner at your worst. For example, Joe may describe his partner as untrusting, suspicious, manipulative and passive-aggressive when she is at her worst. In contrast, Mary may describe Joe as harsh, controlling, self-absorbed and dismissive when he is at his worst. Mary's CNI of Joe is therefore, harsh, controlling, self-absorbed and dismissive. Joe's CNI of Mary is untrusting, suspicious, manipulative and passive-aggressive.

CNIs are another diagnostic tool to use to help determine your dysfunctional stance or a couple's dysfunctional dance. Once you are more clear on the CNIs, you can chart them on the grid and work to identify what steps are needed to move toward relational health.

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