

## HOW TO CONFIDE

According to Dr. John Gottman's research there are three ways to communicate in relationships: **ATTACK, AVOID AND CONFIDE**. Obviously two of these are problematic while one promotes warmth, understanding and reconciliation. Here are some ways for you to practice **CONFIDING**:

1. **Share emotions (mad, sad, glad, scared, confused):** "I feel sad, unhappy, hungry, happy, excited, frightened, etc." Feelings just "are," no justifications necessary. They are not indictments, but information.
2. **Express concerns:** "I think about how hard you work and how tired you are and it scares me." "I'm sorry this is such a hard time."
3. **Show non-aggressive curiosity:** "I'd like to understand why what I said upset you."
4. **Express your wants:** This needs to be present-centered, not future. Can you: Look at me, hold my hand, tell me you love me?"
5. **Act as a mirror:** "I see worry in your face." "I'm not sure you are aware of how tired you appear" "I love your smile."
6. **Affirm the other:** "You are going through something very difficult and I admire your courage."
7. **Share an equal experience:** "As you know I have had lots of the same struggles and set backs in my life too."
8. **Offer reassurance:** "I know we are having a rough moment, but there is no where else I would rather be than here with you."
9. **Self-correct:** "I don't like the way I just spoke to you. I think it was hurtful."

10. **Invite moderation:** “Can you say that to me in a way that is easier for me to hear?”
11. **Signal a desire to listen:** “I want you to know that I want very much to understand you right now and how you feel. I’m listening. I want to hear you.”
12. **Use a stated apology along with an intended correction:** There is a very powerful formula for making amends: 1) “I blew it.” 2) “I’m sorry”-no conditions or excuses. 3) “I hope you can forgive me.”
13. **Express admiration.** “I think this is the thing I love most about you, your caring.” “I love to watch you with other people.” “I love how talented you are.”
14. **Create and use “codes”** These are phrases that are agreed upon that signal a past learning. They are invitations to switch ego states. “May I say something stupid?”
15. **Use accepted strategies for dealing with “flooding.”** We all have moments when our feelings swamp us. It passes. Relax. Trust.

## **MIND YOUR BODY POSITION AND VOICE TONE**

**CONFIDE:** Turned toward with warm voice

**AVOID:** Turned away with cool voice

**ATTACK:** Turned against with hostile voice

*“To keep your marriage brimming  
with love in the loving cup.*

*Whenever you’re wrong admit it;*

*Whenever you’re right, shut up.”*

Ogden Nash

# **THE THREE WORLDS SURVIVAL, EMOTIONAL, PRACTICAL**

## **AXIOMS**

### **For All Three Worlds**

- 1. What satisfies one world will not satisfy another.**
- 2. One cannot be proficient in a particular world without proper information, instruction and modeling.**
- 3. If one lacks expertise in one world, it will be intuitive to borrow the skills of another world.**

### **For the Survival World (SW)**

- 1. This is a life or death world.**
- 2. It is satisfied when there is an outcome, be it good or bad.**
- 3. Denial in this world can be deadly.**

### **For the Emotional World (EM)**

- 1. No one dies in this world.**
- 2. Lacking empathy, warmth and forgiveness this world cannot operate functionally.**
- 3. Vulnerability in this world is good (can elicit tenderness) unlike in the SW or the PW.**

### **For the Practical World (PW)**

- 1. This is a "fix it" world.**
- 2. This is a *quid pro quo* world.**
- 3. This world is fact and data driven.**

***IN LOVE BASED RELATIONSHIPS OF CHOICE THE  
EMOTIONAL WORLD EXISTS AND IS GIVEN ITS  
PROPER PLACE IN THE HIERCHY.***

***SURVIVAL  
EMOTIONAL  
PRACTICAL***

## **KEY SKILLS**

### **For the Survival World: Acute**

- 1. Act immediately in spite of doubt or denial.**
- 2. Think in spite of being adrenalized.**
- 3. Seek expert assistance quickly.**

### **For the Survival World: Chronic**

- 1. Remember what is at stake.**
- 2. Be obedient and follow Dr.'s orders.**
- 3. Become a maven of your/ their disorder and its treatment.**

### **For the Emotional World**

- 1, Being comfortable with being uncomfortable.**
- 2, Being able to hold eye contact while viewing loved one through the "lens of admiration.**
- 3. Being able to remain curious in spite of any temptation to be blaming, defensive or avoidant.**

### **For the Practical World**

- 1. Set goals and create plans to fulfill them.**
- 2. Let facts and data be your guide.**
- 3. Stay focused on priorities regardless of boredom, distraction or discouragement.**

## **WISDOM OF THE EMOTIONAL WORLD**

- 1. Do not assume that a woman is naturally competent (tender) in this world just because she is female.**
- 2. Do not assume just because a man is male he does not long to be safely vulnerable.**
- 3. Striving to be more affirming, affectionate, tender and accepting in this world is a worthwhile life-long pursuit.**

## McNEEL'S SEVEN RULES OF MARRIAGE

- 1. TALK, TALK, TALK.** Your partner can't read your mind. This could also read, "reveal, reveal, reveal."
- 2. ASK, ASK, ASK.** Ask for what you want and need. Ask about the welfare of your partner. Keep asking, keep learning all there is to know about him or her.
- 3. TOUCH, TOUCH, TOUCH.** Touch warmly with your hands, your eyes, and your voice tone. Be warm, especially when you feel justified to be cold.
- 4. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN.** Love relationships give us the opportunity to learn how to listen, really listen. This is the power of being present. Listening heals.
- 5. APOLOGIZE OR SELF-CORRECT AT EVERY POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY.** This is not saying, "I'm wrong, you're right." This is saying, "I know you and care enough to be mindful of you and your feelings."
- 6. COME TO KNOW YOURSELF WELL ENOUGH SO YOU ARE ABLE TO PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES FROM YOURSELF.** If you believe you are not capable of inflicting deep emotional harm because you are nice or well intentioned, think again. Protect the other.
- 7. WHEN IN DOUBT, BE WARMLY CURIOUS.** This will help you switch from the coldness of the Practical World or the intensity of the Survival World to the warmth of the Emotional World. Love is warm.

"An obvious instance is that of ordinary and happy marriage. (Two people) cannot live together without having against each other a kind of everlasting joke. Each has discovered that the other is a fool, but a great fool. This largeness, this grossness and gorgeousness of folly is the thing which we all find about those with whom we are in intimate contact; and it is the one enduring basis of affection, and even of respect.

G. K. Chesterton

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN THE EMOTIONAL WORLD

**1. AFFIRM, NOT NECESSARILY AGREE WITH THE FEELINGS OF THE OTHER PERSON.** “I can see you are really upset.” “I know this feels unfair to you.” “I know you feel hurt by me.”

**2. SEE CONFLICT SITUATIONS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE ONE’S SELF, AS OPPOSED TO BEING DEFENSIVE.** “We are having an awful time right now and I want you to know I wouldn’t be anywhere else.”

**3. NO ONE DIES IN THE EMOTIONAL WORLD.** It only feels like it, but feelings aren’t facts. The fact is that folks get healed in the EW and not elsewhere.

**4. MEMORIZE, “IT’S NOT PERSONAL.”** It is easy to say, but amazing to actually implement during conflict, especially when the other person is saying, “you, you, you,” and it’s not nice.

**5. THE NUMBER ONE EW SKILL IS: “BEING COMFORTABLE BEING UNCOMFORTABLE.”**

Emotional arousal, positive or negative can be uncomfortable. But, it’s only discomfort. No one dies.

**6. KEEP IN MIND: “FACTS DON’T COUNT.”** In the Practical World, they are essential, not so in the EW.

**7. TO KNOW THAT IT IS A “MORTAL SIN” TO REMOVE WARMTH AS YOUR “LEADING EDGE.”**

What’s a “leading edge?” It is the most palpable emotion. Love is warm even if you are angry, especially when angry. I know, strange, but true.

**8. MAINTAIN A “LENS OF ADMIRATION.”** We see others through “lenses.” The way to see our loved ones clearly is through the Lens of Admiration. It allows us to see the everlasting nature of their character and not be distracted by their momentary behavior.

# **THE THREE TYPES OF LOVE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE EMOTIONAL WORLD**

## **HEALING LIMP-ALONG DESTRUCTIVE**

If I was raised in a home where the parental figures modeled a healing relationship, then I will have grown up exposed to the skills related to maintaining such a relationship. The description of the Healing will seem familiar and the description of the Destructive will sound foreign and sad.

If I was raised in a Limp-Along household I will possess the model to have such a relationship while longing for better, but frustrated.

If I was raised in a Destructive household, I will intuitively know how to sustain myself in a similar situation either as the victim figure or the persecutor figure. Trust and safety are seen as unattainable.

### **PRINCIPLES**

1. All three of these relationships can be stable over time (Healing relationships are stable around empathy, warmth and conflict and recovery; Limp-along relationships are stable around loyalty to a status quo, unrequited blame or fatalism—"there's nothing to be done; and destructive relationships are stable around bitterness, abuse, victimization, tragedy, shame and grim determination).
2. No one commits to a love relationship with the expectation or hope it will develop into a destructive one in the future.
3. All love relationships change over time, either positively through informed evolution or negatively from the unchallenged forces of fate or from personal habit.

**THE GOAL: To move in the direction of Healing**

## **HEALING RELATIONSHIPS**

1. There is an eagerness to promote the feelings of warmth and of safety through acceptance, forgiveness, love, conflict resolution and reassurance.
2. The natural and unnatural crises of life facilitate a continual process of renewal and rebirth.
3. A language develops over time that is unique to the relationship in which is embedded the codes for humor, affection, shared memories, request, conflict, idiosyncrasy and self-correction.

## **LIMP-ALONG RELATIONSHIPS**

1. These relationships often appear static, “never changing,” because unconsciously they seek stability over evolution.
2. All limp-along relationships either degrade over time due to habit and life forces, or grow due to a willingness to allow in new information, modeling and guidance.
3. These relationships often need a crisis that is powerful enough to challenge the process of denial and wrest them out of their comfort zone and allow for outside intervention.

## **DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

1. Fear is a predominant and integral part of these relationships as there is an impending sense of either physical or psychological threat and frequent crisis moments.
2. These relationships allow for the abdication of personal responsibility, either through blame or projection.
3. Uncorrected over time these relationships will often involve some form of tissue damage, either self-inflicted or from the behavior of another person.

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