

## INTRODUCTION TO RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

No one is born knowing how to build good relationships. Relationship building is a skill that can be learned. In this six-week course you will learn a method of communication and conflict resolution that, with practice and commitment, can result in more satisfying relationships with friends and family and in the workplace.

School For Ethics  
Washington Ethical Society  
7750 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20012  
882-6650

# Control Talk

LIGHT: PERSUADING

- DIRECTING
- SEEKING AGREEMENT
- TEACHING
- CAUTIONING
- PRaising
- ADvisING
- HEAVY: BLAMING
- ATTACKING
- THREATENING
- DEMANDING
- LABELING
- EVALUATING
- RIDICULING
- CRITICIZING
- NAGGING
- LYING
- SARCASM
- WITHHOLDING
- PASSIVE (VELVET GLOVE)
- ACTIVE (IRON FIST)

Low Risk

WIN or LOSE

"you..."  
"always..."  
"should..."

High Risk

- FRIENDLY
- SOCIABLE
- PLAYFUL
- RELAXED
- OPINIONS
- PREFERENCES
- CONVENTIONAL
- CONVERSATIONAL
- TOPICAL FOCUS
- TALKING ABOUT "IT"
- AUTOMATIC
- INFORMATIVE

AN INCIDENT IS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO ONE OR BOTH OF US THAT AFFECTS THE WAY WE RELATE TO EACH OTHER

## IV. Straight Talk or Committed

- SELF-DISCLOSING
- CARING
- COMMITTED
- RESPONSIVE
- SELF-RESPONSIBLE

- "I...SENSE
- FEEL
- INTERPRET
- DO
- WANT

NDW

"maybe..."  
"probably..."  
"what if..."

PAST and FUTURE

Low Risk

High Risk

## III Search Talk or Contemplate

- TENTATIVE
- PONDERING
- SEARCHING
- EXPLORING
- REFLECTING
- INTELLECTUAL
- "TESTING THE WATERS"
- DETACHED
- NON-THREATENING

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NDW

WASHINGTON ETHICAL SOCIETY

Prepared for National Leaders Council  
Fall Conference, 1979

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Donald D. Montagna

The quality of relationships determines the quality of life.

The WASHINGTON ETHICAL SOCIETY is a humanistic, educational, and religious community seeking to improve the quality of human relationships through the cultivation of ethical character and a more ethical society. Without relying on a common dogma or creed, we affirm the worth of every human being, and we trust that people have the capacity to create a more ethical society. We work to understand ethical principles by participating in Sunday Platform meetings, a weekly childrens ethical education program, a high school, and adult school for ethics and relationship building, and a variety of ethical action projects.

WASHINGTON ETHICAL SOCIETY  
7750 Sixteenth Street, NW  
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202-882-6650

Founder  
Dr. Felix Adler, 1876

Member  
American Ethical Union  
International Humanist & Ethical Union

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

I was angry with my friend:  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

- Blake, A Poison Tree

Anyone can become angry--that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way--that is not easy.

- Aristotle (335B.C.) Nacomachean Ethic

### Introduction

1. Conflict is inevitable. One cannot live without colliding with someone's self-interest. Our collisions with one another are either creative or destructive depending on how knowledgeable we are of ways to constructively resolve conflict.
2. To avoid conflict is to avoid significant relationships. Whenever one becomes closely involved in a friendship or works hard at a task, discord arises. What determines the quality of a relationship is the ability to resolve conflict. Great causes and great friendships require such knowledge, or else they self-destruct in the act of being.
3. At the core of every ethical issue is conflict and anger, or vice versa at the center of every conflict is an ethical dilemma. Unless we know how to resolve conflict, we are impotent when confronted by a still smoldering ethical issue.
4. No one is born knowing how to resolve conflict: we must learn it. One of the best ways to teach ethics is for the ethical leader and member to role model ethical conflict resolution and for the ethical society to be a laboratory in which members learn to become effective ethical agents.

### Identifying Conflict

5. Large conflicts result whenever specific incidents of conflict are not resolved and are allowed to accumulate. Predictable symptoms are found whenever individual incidents of conflict are not resolved:
  - a. People become "distant" and are unwilling to participate.
  - b. People withdraw completely.
  - c. They look for "rational" or "good cases" to prove their inner feeling that there is something wrong with the other person. They may disagree philosophically, politically, or act competitively for the sake of opposition.
  - d. They usually forget the specific incident, but begin to view their "antagonist" as bad or incompetent and incapable of reform.
  - e. They look for allies who share this negative view.
  - f. They form political blocks to confront in a group people they would like to confront individually.
  - g. Political groups brought together by conflict find it difficult to resolve issues because they have in common their opposition to a person or persons but often don't share the same incidents of conflict.

- h. Conflicts are exacerbated when all parties fight for victory rather than resolution. (No victory is possible because the very act of winning creates a fresh incident of conflict. The losers either resign and thereby weaken the relationship or become even more bitterly entrenched in their efforts to sabotage the victors.)

6. All conflict begins with individual incidents and can only be resolved by individuals. Of course many people can share a similar experience and all feel satisfaction if the issue is collectively resolved. Still each individual will test to see if the resolution works for him or her.

7. All conflict resolution begins with this first step: One must acknowledge the existence of an incident of conflict. Obvious, perhaps, but most destructive conflict results from one or both parties avoiding the conflict by denying it until it becomes too big to ignore. Often this is too late.

#### Resolving the Conflict

8. The only way to resolve a conflict is for two people to get together with the intention to do so. This means that a meeting designed with a strategy for winning is doomed to failure. As all conflicts originate in the individual experience of each person, they must be similarly resolved. Even political and labor negotiations are conducted face to face by individuals.

9. The desire to win a conflict is the enemy of resolution. This does not mean that one must acquiesce or surrender one's principles. It only requires seeing the limitations of our desires to win arguments, to be right, to get our way because it's better. These strategies only result in polarizing the opposition: blaming, defending, judging, provoking, concealing, assuming, directing, diagnosing, advising, demanding, competing, praising, persuading, withholding, withdrawing, rejecting are attempts to control the other which violates their self-worth by attempting to use them for our ends.

10. Effective and ethical conflict resolution occurs in an environment that respects the worth of all participants by allowing each to express themselves and by trusting them to find an honest and acceptable resolution within themselves. ("All significant battles are waged within the self."-Sheldon Kopp)

11. Staging a conflict resolution session is more like preparing for a ritual than a brawl.

1. It requires noticing incidents that hurt or anger us. When we do not have the habit of noticing incidents ("it is too petty" or "it's not my business anyway"), the accumulated effect of many incidents is to obfuscate the issue making it too amorphous to resolve the feelings that eventually rage on blindly and must be justified by even more collaborating incidents.
2. It requires announcing that you have an incident and agreeing on a time and place to work it out that is mutually acceptable.

3. Only one person "works" at a time. The listener never defends or agrees or explains. The listener's job is to repeat back what he or she is saying until both parties have a common understanding of how the "working" party experienced the incident. Later the listener will take a turn communicating.
4. The "work" begins when the first party describes the incident, including when and what happened, as BRIEFLY as possible so that the listener understands and can repeat it back.
5. The power of an incident is on a symbolic level and depends upon the interpretation of its meaning; that the "worker" has ascribed to it. The "worker" communicates his or her interpretations about what the incident was saying about him/herself. ("You're not encouraging me to run for the board, or you're not thanking me for my committee work, I interpreted to mean I was not a competent person." This is not a time for attacking with interpretations such as, "Your not returning my call I interpreted to mean that you were insensitive and uncaring." Blaming,--a no-no. An interpretation is about oneself: "Your not talking to me I interpreted to mean that I was not loveable, not worth calling." (If you are now questioning, whether such simple incidents generate such deep seated self doubts, let me assure you that all the evidence indicates they do, although most of us hate to admit it.
6. When a relationship can tolerate the discharge of feelings, the resolution is easier and the relationship becomes stronger. Yelling and banging are helpful, but hitting and verbal attacks intended to hurt cannot be allowed. Remember anger skews reasoning, theirs and yours, and must be discharged to allow room for the feelings of resolution.
7. The final step is to ask for what you want clearly and directly. Sometimes the wants are themselves irrational and once the anger and hurt has been acknowledged by the other and discharged, they seem not important. The worker may not get what he/she wants and will have to negotiate. It is essential that neither party settle for less than they want or agree to more, for this is not resolution. Trust that by continuing this process resolution is possible as long as both parties value the relationship.
8. Usually before the listening partner can agree to resolve the conflict he or she must go through this same process of describing interpretations, expressing feelings, and stating wants. When all the wants are explicit, conflict resolution is a reasonable task.
12. Every relationship must incorporate some form of ethical conflict resolution ritual in order to keep open the avenues of communication that inevitably become jammed with unresolved incidents.
13. Harmony as a goal for personal and political relationships, is an unrealistic ideal. The ideal relationship is one that is able to face discord and create harmony.
14. This method of conflict resolution takes practice, but it works.

## THE FOUR STYLES OF TALKING

It's the first day of work for a new employee in your office. You ask your new peer out to lunch. Imagine you're sitting in the restaurant. What might you say to your new co-worker in each of the Four Styles?

Style I.(Small Talk)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Style II.(Control Talk)\_\_\_\_\_

Light:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Heavy:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mode III.(Search Talk)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mode IV.(Straight Talk)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

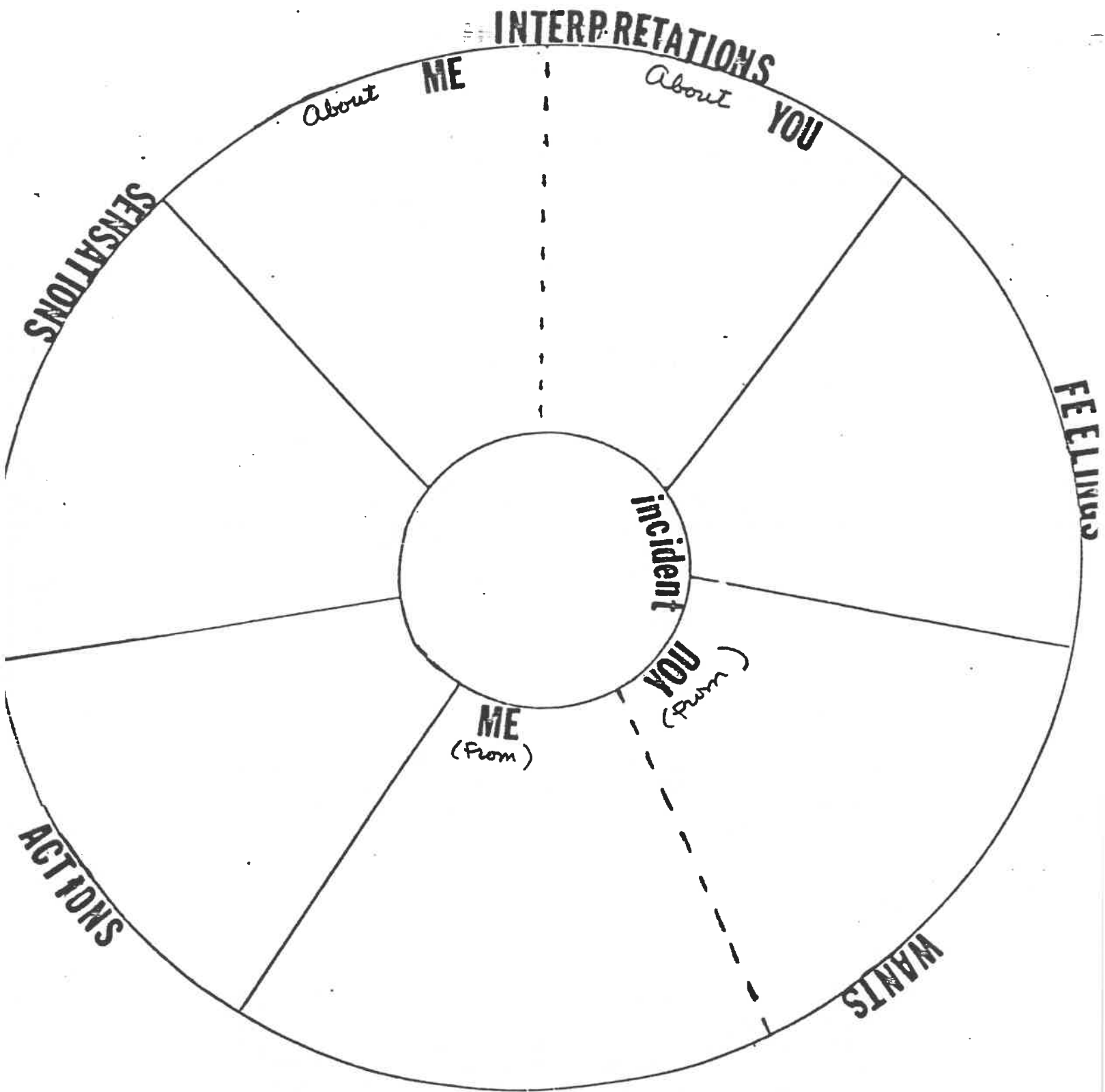


### CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES

What style is each of these responses? Small Talk, Light Control Talk, Heavy Control Talk, Search Talk, or Straight Talk?

- 1. Do you always have to follow so close? I'd like to get home alive, you know.
- 2. There sure is alot of traffic today!
- 3. Maybe next time we'd be able to enjoy our outing together more if we took the Metro.
- 4. When you passed that car I felt scared.
- 5. I remember my mom and dad having fights in the car. He would always drive and she would tell him he was going too fast.
- 6. I wonder if our fights about driving happen more when tension is building up in other parts of our lives.
- 7. One thought I've had about you is that maybe part of you kind of enjoys scaring me.
- 8. I so much hate feeling scared that I'd rather nag you and embarrass you about your driving instead.
- 9. Careful! Your're getting awful close when you pass.
- 10. If you don't drive more carefully I'm going to drive us everywhere!
- 11. I wish our car had a bullhorn attached and we could yell rude things to people like that!  
(about another car on the road)
- 12. In Drivers Ed they said you should stay back one car length for every 10 miles per hour you're going.
- 13. You're willing to risk our lives just so you can get home a minute and a half earlier! You must be crazy!
- 14. I'd like to set aside a time to talk about our disagreements about driving - a time to talk when we're not in the car.

B:traffic.irb



## INCIDENTS

An incident is something that happens to one or both of us that affects the way we are together. I may interpret an incident so that it draws me closer to you, or I may experience distance after an incident.

My husband said "Let's just celebrate our anniversary next week when we're not so busy."

My brother moved to California.

The babysitter was twenty-five minutes late.

Jane sent me a funny birthday card.

Bob said he'd come to my party but he didn't.

My mother said "Your visits are so short. Can't you stay another day or two?"

My boss said "I've asked Bill to help you with this project."

Susan called me at 11:30 last night.

This morning when I opened the refrigerator to get milk for my cereal, it was all gone.

Going back to an incident, a particular point in time, and describing "Just the facts, mam" as Jack Webb used to say on *Dragnet*, is the first step in resolving a conflict.

You may know when you're having an incident by some physical reaction you have during or after it. Sweaty palms, headaches, blushing, butterflies, etc. could all be signals that something is happening.

When incidents are ignored or "swept under the rug" there become more and more topics that are "off limits" to talk about because you might bump into an old incident. This creates boredom and finally death for most relationships. So a regular "maintenance" program for looking at incidents and resolving conflict helps relationships survive and grow. Setting up ground rules - agreements about how we'll treat each other when we talk about disappointments and disagreements - is an important ingredient in resolving conflicts between people who want to build a relationship.

### CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE



## THE AWARENESS WHEEL

The Awareness Wheel is a tool for connecting with the one person who can guarantee your success as a communicator: yourself! Doing an Awareness Wheel will help you slow down and develop a more detailed portrait of your experience. At the hub put the incident, issue or event you'd like to know more about. The five spokes make up the five parts of any experience:

**SENSATIONS** *Straight Talk* describes sensations as the data that comes in - what I saw or heard. These kind of sensations provide the background for our interpretations. The sense data "I saw you wiggling your foot" might lead me to the interpretation "I think you're nervous."

In our ten years of using the Awareness Wheel at WES, we've come to describe sensations to mean the physical sensations experienced in the body because they are such powerful clues to feelings. "I have butterflies in my stomach." Or "I blushed." Or "My neck feels like it is in a vice grip."

**FEELINGS** Feelings are our spontaneous emotional reactions in an experience. By getting in touch with your feelings you can use them as a resource to more accurately understand what you expect, what you're thinking, what you want. Expect to find multiple and sometimes conflicting feelings - each one will probably be linked with a different interpretation. A few examples of the hundreds of possible feelings are embarrassment, fear, love, joy, loneliness, excitement, worry, elation, surprise, anger, anxiety, sadness, relief, and pleasure. If you find that the word "that" follows a feeling, then you are describing an interpretation, not a feeling. ("I feel that you didn't come over because you're mad about the tickets," is an interpretation.)

**INTERPRETATIONS** "We see things not as they are, but as we are." Interpretations are our thoughts, expectations, judgements, opinions, beliefs, impressions, conclusions, attitudes, motivations - about ourselves and about the other person. They are how I "read" an event or situations. They help us answer the question "Why did she do what she did?" as in "I think you're seeing Jim again because you're scared to be on your own." Or "I think you're embarrassed about our house and that's why you don't want people to come over." Interpretations about me help me explain why this is a "big deal" for me as in "I should please my mother because she's my mother." Or "My older brother and I were very competitive and I that is spilling over into my relationship with my boss at work."

Interpretations are our best tries at making sense out of our experiences. Since we construct meaning out of the combination of personal history and immediate experience, different people's interpretations of the same event can vary considerably.

Interpretations are like onions. Ask "Why?" and you'll peel back the juicier layers underneath. If you start with a Control Talk judgement such as "I think you're being totally irresponsible with our money," you can ask "Why do I think he's being irresponsible with our money?" and come up with a Straight Talk interpretation such as "One thought I've considered is that you're in competition with your brother to see who can be the best provider."

**ACTIONS** In the Action part our you Awareness Wheel put things you did (turning the radio on, smoking a cigarette, walking away, "forgetting" to call back, etc.) and things you're going to do as a result of your wants.

**WANTS** In using the Awareness Wheel tool we've identified two kinds of wants. The first kind are things I want to give to myself as a result of getting in touch with this experience. These are things only I can give or do for me. I might decide to change my behavior or I might design an affirmation to say that will support a new belief or attitude I want to strengthen in myself. Examples might be "I'm going to give myself a massage every week." "I'm going to talk with my parents more often about my professional work life." Or an affirmation such as "I can have fun without spending lots of money." Or "I can say 'no' to a friend and still be a friend."

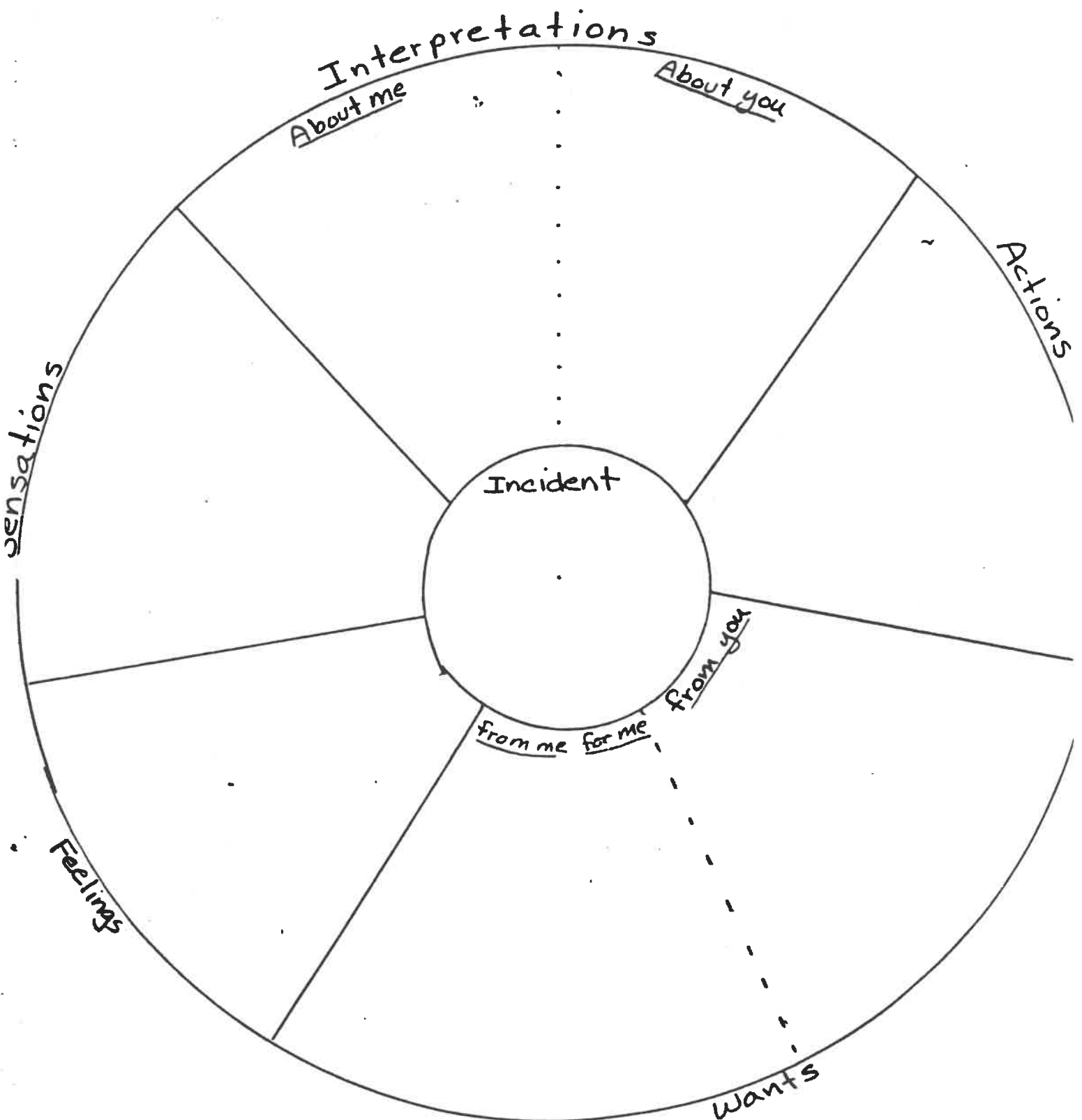
The other kinds of wants are things I decide to ask for from the other person. State them in the positive rather than the negative. (i.e. say "I'd like you to be on time" rather than "Don't be late.") Make them as specific rather than general. (i.e. say "I'd like you to check with me first about a meeting date." rather than "I'd like you to respect me as a colleague.")

How can you tell if what you would like is a Control Talk demand or a Straight Talk want? You can check out your own intentions. Is my intention to control, belittle, put down, limit, be right, etc.? Or is my intention to share my experience and hope that a resolution that brings out the best in both of us can be found? Does my language and tone of voice match my intention? And finally the reaction I get from the other person may be a clue - a defensive, angry reaction could be a clue that I'm more attached to the outcome, to getting a "yes" than I am in sharing my experience.

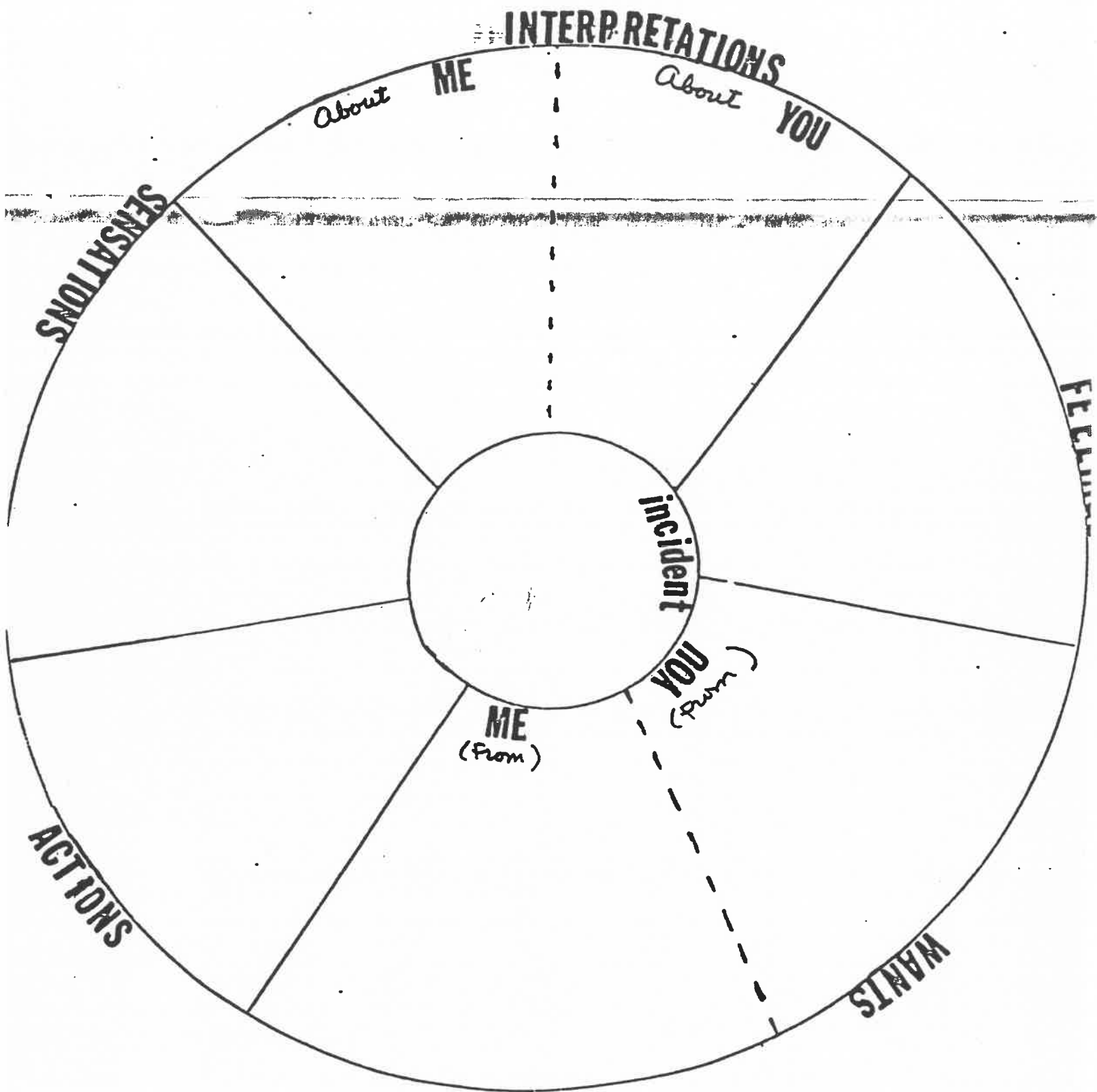
**THE AWARENESS WHEEL** can be a useful communication tool in many ways: to get clear about your wants; to explore old beliefs and attitudes; to send clear messages; to listen more attentively; to communicate with others from a position of mutual respect; to tackle tough issues and conflicts and develop mutually acceptable solutions.

(from *Straight Talk* by Sherod Miller et al, New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, Inc., 1981.) E:aw.1rb

# AWARENESS WHEEL



Incident: Something that happened to one or both of us that affects the way we relate to each other. (10)



## SPEAKING SELF-RESPONSIBLY

### SELF-RESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS "I", "Me", "My", "Mine"

- \*claim ownership of thoughts, feelings and actions
- \*identify me as the source, the originator, the author of my own experience
- \*are statements of who I am, what I believe, sense, feel
- \*encourage disclosure of differences
- \*aim for clarity and accuracy
- \*Small talk, Search Talk and Straight Talk

"My impression is different."  
"I want more time to think about it."  
"It's important to me."  
"I wonder if I'd have the nerve to say no."

### UNDER-RESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS "It", "Some People", "One", "Most people"

- \*speak for no-one; claim no ownership
- \*hide my feelings or intentions in generalities
- \*are designed to help me avoid sharing my true self
- \*others must guess at the source of my opinions

"Anybody would be furious about this."  
"It might help if she calmed down a little."  
"One needs to have a boss that can be counted on."

### OVER-RESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS "You", "We", "Everybody", "All"

- \*rely on words that imply universal power
- \*by using "you", "all" and "everybodies" I speak for others and establish myself as the authority on their experience
- \*belittle others by assuming I'm the captain of everybody's ship
- \*the listener tends to feel trapped since his or her feelings and wants are assumed, or disregarded
- \*are a form of Control Talk

"You couldn't possibly understand what I'm going through."  
"This class is for you. You know how you've been wanting to meet people."  
"We should get the oil checked in the car."  
"All men know women hate to get candy on Valentine's Day."



"FEELINGS LIST" BY WILLHITE & ASSOCIATES

|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| AGGRESSIVE | AGONIZED     | ANXIOUS      | APOLOGETIC    | ARROGANT    | BASHFUL     | BLISSFUL     |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| BORED      | CAUTIOUS     | COLD         | CONCENTRATING | CONFIDENT   | CURIOUS     | DEMURE       |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| DETERMINED | DISAPPOINTED | DISAPPROVING | DISBELIEVING  | DISGUSTED   | DISTASTEFUL | EVEL/DRIFTIN |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| ECSTATIC   | ENRAGED      | ENVIOUS      | EXASPERATED   | EXHAUSTED   | FRIGHTENED  | FRUSTRATED   |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| GRIEVING   | GUILTY       | HAPPY        | HORRIFIED     | HOT         | HUNGOVER    | HURT         |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| HYSTERICAL | INDIFFERENT  | IDIOTIC      | INNOCENT      | INTERESTED  | JEALOUS     | JOYFUL       |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| LOADED     | LOVELY       | LOVESTRUCK   | MEDITATIVE    | MISCHIEVOUS | MISERABLE   | NEGATIVE     |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| OBSTINATE  | OPTIMISTIC   | PAINED       | PARANOID      | PERPLEXED   | PRUDISH     | PUZZLED      |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| REGRETFUL  | RELIEVED     | SAD          | SATISFIED     | SHOCKED     | SHEEPISH    | SMUG         |
|            |              |              |               |             |             |              |
| SURLLY     | SURPRISED    | SUSPICIOUS   | SYMPATHETIC   | THOUGHTFUL  | UNDECIDED   | WITHDRAWN    |

INTERPRETATIONS

"We see things not as they are-  
but as we are."

Interpretations are our attempts to make meaning out of our experiences. They are based on personal history and immediate experience. They are ideas, thoughts, assumptions, expectations, opinions, impressions, conclusions, and attitudes.

When exploring for interpretations about the other person ask:

- Why did he or she do that?
- What do I think was her intention?
- What do I know about him that would help me explain or understand this?
- Why did he or she do that? What does this mean?
- What did I believe is that message the other is giving me?
- Why did he or she do that?

When exploring for interpretations about yourself ask:

- Why did I notice this? Why did it bug me?
- What does it say about me that I noticed this?
- What thoughts or beliefs does this incident bring up for me? What's at issue here?
- What would mom and dad say about this?
- Why did I notice this? What conclusions do I make about me when this happens?

EXAMPLE:

Incident: My boy friend of six months didn't invite me to Thanksgiving dinner at his parents house in Baltimore.

*About Me*

1. I'm not good enough
2. I equate meeting your family with you want more commitment.
3. I'm not good at small talk.
4. I'm worried about getting older.
5. Family is more important to me than it is to you.

*About Him*

1. You're embarrassed about your family.
2. You're embarrassed about me.
3. My not finishing college embarrasses you.
4. Your brother stole your last girl friend + you want to keep me a secret.
5. You don't want to get too serious yet.

## PATTERNS

### WHAT IS A PATTERN?

A pattern is a way of relating that served me well in the past but may not now. It is my unconscious beliefs that I have that form my behavior patterns, the consequences of which, I might not choose, if I thought I had a choice.

### HOW ARE PATTERNS FORMED?

As a child, I formed patterns of behavior that enabled me to deal with my parents or other authority figures in my life. When incidents happened with them, I used some strategy that I learned that worked to deal with them. It might have taken the form of crying, withdrawing, throwing temper tantrums, or some other behavior that generally got me what I wanted from them.

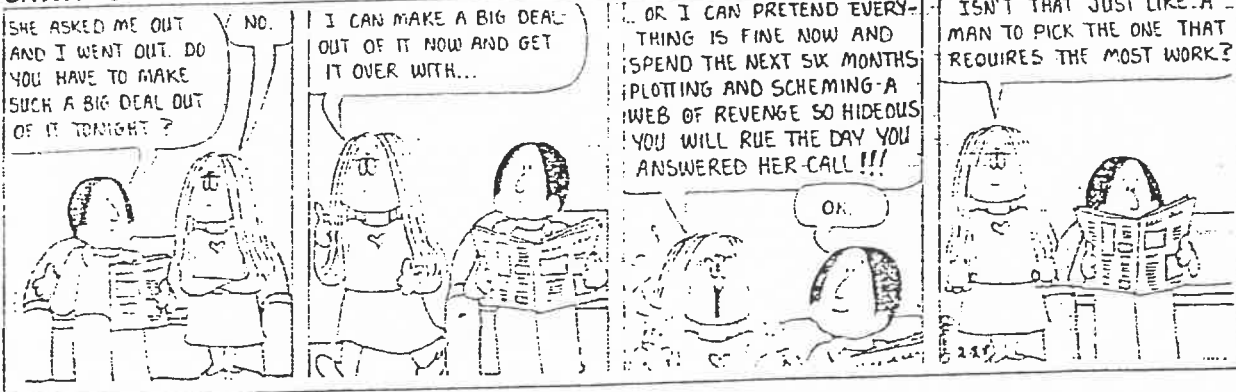
### HOW COME I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THEM NOW?

Because these beliefs were formed at a very early age, they became part of our unconscious repertoire of reactions to life. These behavior patterns were reinforced through constant use so they became automatic and unconscious.

### WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THEM?

As an adult we now know that we have a choice about these patterns. One choice is blame the situation or person or persons who are part of our pattern and reinforce the pattern and the unconscious belief that underlies it OR we can reassess as adults, the negative consequences we may experience by having the patterns and choose to find another strategy for coping with these situations.

#### CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE



PATTERNS: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

\* Patterns in our lives are based on unconscious beliefs and interpretations we have made as children about how the world works, and what we have to do to be accepted, loved, survive, get our way, or control our lives.

\* Focusing on our early childhood memories can often help to explain how we choose the patterns we choose. As Stewart Emory says "events are always followed by decisions. It's not the events that drive us crazy, it's the decisions."

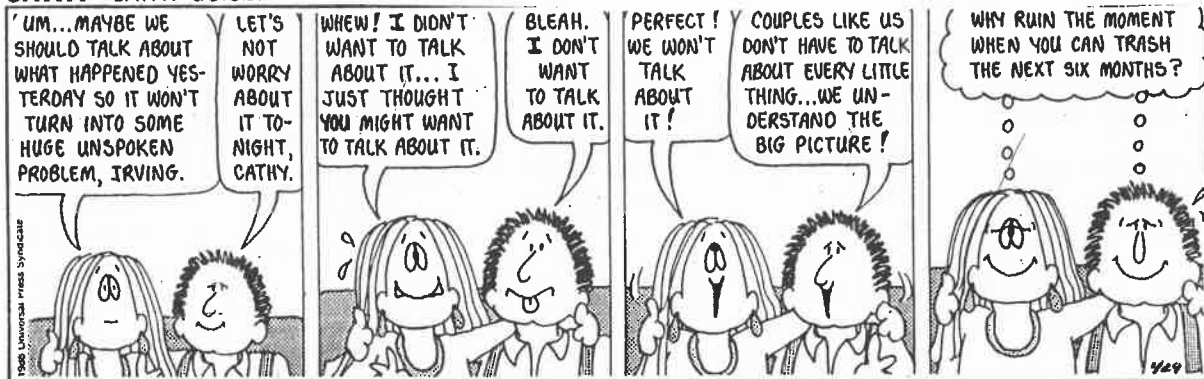
\* The place or attitude from which to look at a pattern is the observing, accepting Inner Witness, a personality within us that is our nurturing adult. The Inner Witness observes our Inner Critic which works to censor pattern observation.

\* Wants often become clearer and more attainable when we use the Inner Witness to help make the unconscious pattern conscious, and when the payoffs and costs are weighed anew we can choose.

\* Each pattern has payoffs and costs. By becoming conscious of a pattern and weighing the payoffs and costs we have a change to evaluate earlier beliefs and interpretations and then choose how to be, based on today's experience of life.

\* A pattern usually has a "life of it's own". Reactions to our life situations trigger a response based on past experience and that response is circular. Each step of the pattern leads logically to the next step which ultimately leads back to the beginning of the pattern.

**CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE**



## SOME COMMON PAYOFFS AND COSTS OF PATTERNS

### PAYOFFS:

1. It's familiar. This pattern is old and a well-known way of coping to me.
2. I don't have to be responsible.
3. I can blame others. I get to be the victim. My cruelty can be justified - see how they're treating me!
4. I get to be right and be better than the other person. I feel superior.
5. This is high, exciting, dramatic energy. Never a dull moment!
6. It proves my belief about \_\_\_\_\_ (life, bosses, men, women, authority figures, intimacy, etc.)

### COSTS:

1. It keeps me from creating closeness and intimacy with the people in my life.
2. My self-esteem suffers when I'm cruel or when I see myself as the victim.
3. I don't get what I want or need.
4. I have alot of anxiety and uncertainty.
5. I miss opportunities to grow and learn and be the best I can be.
6. I drive people away.
7. My negative expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies.
8. I cause myself to be alone and lonely.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORY

"Events are always followed by decisions. It's not the events that drive us crazy. It's the decisions." -Stewart Emory

"Life isn't one thing after another. It's the same damn thing over and over." -Edna St. Vincent Millay

USE THESE STEPS TO EXPLORE HOW DECISIONS YOU MADE LONG AGO COULD HAVE CREATED A PATTERN THAT STILL GOES ON TODAY, YET DOESN'T SERVE YOU AS AN ADULT. BY MAKING UNCONSCIOUS CHOICES CONSCIOUS YOU CAN CHOOSE NEW ACTIONS AND RESPONSES BASED ON YOUR ASSESSMENT OF TODAY'S PAYOFFS AND COSTS.

"Trying fails. Awareness cures." - Fritz Perls

- I. Take time to recall and early childhood memory or incident.
- II. Explore your memory by writing an Awareness Wheel about it.
- III. See what your pen writes when you ask yourself these questions:  
LIFE/THE WORLD IS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OTHERS/MEN/WOMEN/AUTHORITY FIGURES ARE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THEREFORE I AM: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THEREFORE I SHOULD: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- IV. What are the payoffs and costs of continuing to operate out of this early decision or pattern?

Payoffs:

Costs:

- V. Are there incidents in my life today that remind me of this early childhood incident? How would I like to choose to be?

DAVE BARRY

## Red-Hot Memories

**H**ave you ever really embarrassed yourself? Don't answer that, stupid. It's a rhetorical question. Of course you've embarrassed yourself. Everybody has. I bet the pope has. If you were to say to the pope: "Your Holy Worshipfulness, I bet you've pulled some blockheaded boners in your day, huh?" he'd smile that warm, knowing, fatherly smile he has, and then he'd wave. He can't hear a word you're saying, up on that balcony.

But my point is that if you've ever done anything humiliating, you've probably noticed that your **BRAIN NEVER LETS YOU FORGET IT**. This is the same brain that never remembers things you **SHOULD** remember. If you were bleeding to death and the emergency room doctor asked you what blood type you were, you'd say: "I think it's B. Or maybe C. I'm pretty sure it's a letter." But if the doctor asked you to describe the skirt you were wearing when you were doing the mashed potato in the ninth-grade dance competition in front of 350 people, and your underwear, which had holes in it, fell to your ankles, you'd say, without hesitating for a millisecond, "It was gray felt with a pink flocked poodle."

See BARRY, G11, Col. 1

we made—Steve Suave and His Gorgeous Date—when one of my friends sidled up to me and observed that, over on the other side, my date was using her spare hand to hold hands with another guy. This was of course a much better-looking guy. This was Paul Newman, only taller.

Several of my friends gathered to watch. I thought: What am I supposed to do here? Hit the guy? That would have been asking for a lifetime of dental problems. He was a varsity football player; I was on the dance committee. I also had to rule out hitting my date. The ideal move would have been to spontaneously burst into flames and die. I have read that this sometimes happens to people. But you never get a break like that when you need it.

Finally I turned to my date, dropped her hand, looked her square in the eye, and said: "Um." Just like that: "Um." My brain absolutely loves to remember this. "Way to go, Dave!" it shrieks to me, when I'm stopped at red lights, 23½ years later. Talk about eloquent! My brain can't get over what a jerk I was. It's always coming up with much better ideas for things I could have said. I should start writing them down, in case we ever develop time travel. I'd go back to the gym with a whole Rolodex file filled with remarks, and I'd read them to my date over the course of a couple of hours. Wouldn't she feel awful! Ha ha!

It just occurred to me that she may be out there right now, in our reading audience, in which case I wish to state for the record that I am leading an absolutely wonderful life, and I have been on the Johnny Carson show, and I hope things are equally

**HE WAS DOING**, and he knew they'd give him a cruel nickname that would stick like epoxy cement for the rest of his life, such that when he went to his 45th reunion, even if he had been appointed chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the instant his classmates saw him, they'd shriek: "Hey, look! It's ZIT!"

Everybody has incidents like this. My mother is always reliving the time she lost her car in a shopping center parking lot, and she was wandering around with several large shopping bags and two small children, looking helpless, and after a while other shoppers took pity on her and offered to help. "It's a black Chevrolet," she told them, over and over. And they searched and searched and searched for it. They were extremely nice.

They all agreed that it can be darned easy to lose your car in these big parking lots. They had been there for an hour, some of them, searching for this black Chevrolet, and it was getting dark, when my mother remembered that several days earlier we had bought a new car. "I'm sorry!" she told the people, smiling brightly so they would see what a humorous situation this was. "It's not a black Chevrolet! It's a yellow Ford!" She kept on smiling as they edged away, keeping their eyes on her.

My own personal brain is forever dredging up the time in 11th grade when I took a girl, a very attractive girl on whom I had a life-threatening

### BARRY, From G1

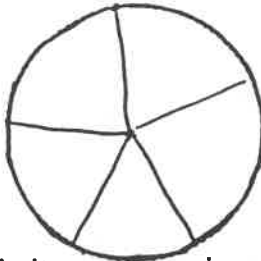
Your brain cherishes embarrassing memories. It likes to take them out and fondle them. This probably explains a lot of unexplained suicides. A successful man with a nice family and a good career will be out on his patio, cooking hamburgers, seemingly without a care in the world, when his brain, rummaging through its humiliating-incident collection, selects an old favorite, which it replays for the zillionth time, and the man is suddenly so overcome by feelings of shame that he stabs himself in the skull with his barbecue fork.

At the funeral, people say how shocking it was, a seemingly happy and well-adjusted person choosing to end it all. They assume he must have had a terrible dark secret involving drugs or organized crime or dressing members of the conch family in flimsy undergarments. Little do they know he was thinking about the time in social studies class in 1963 when he discovered a hard-to-reach pimple roughly halfway down his back, and he got to working on it, subtly at first, but with gradually increasing intensity, eventually losing track of where he was, until suddenly he realized the room had become silent, and he looked up, with his arm stuck halfway down the back of his shirt, and he saw that **EVERYBODY IN THE CLASS**

The Power Of Early Childhood Incidents!

## STEPS IN SHARING AN INCIDENT

1.



Connect with the five aspects of your experience by going through the Awareness Wheel.

2. Ask permission in a caring, non-blaming way.  
When? Where? How Long? Who?
3. Decide what you want to say.

When.....  
(describe the incident)

I feel.....  
(emotions)

Because.....  
(interpretations)

I want.....  
(turn your complaints into wants)

4. If you're having trouble being heard check:

-did I just plunge in or did I ask permission and set a date?

-is my intention to blame and prove my case (mode II) or is my intention to share my experience in a self-responsible way (mode IV)?

-did I state what I want in a negative way (don't think of a hot fudge sundae) or did I say what I'd like the other person to do?

-does the other person have an incident to share that would help clear the air?



CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE

I HOPE WE CAN STILL BE FRIENDS, CATHY.

FRIENDS AS IN, "I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU"... OR FRIENDS AS IN, "WE'LL STAY IN TOUCH UNTIL YOU RETURN MY ALBUMS"?

FRIENDS AS IN, "I'LL CALL IF I DON'T MEET SOMEONE BETTER"... FRIENDS AS IN, "PLEASE DON'T SAY MEAN THINGS ABOUT ME TO YOUR SWEET MOTHER"...

...OR FRIENDS AS IN, "I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR DISGUSTING FACE AGAIN"?

ONE MIND, ONE THOUSAND MISINTERPRETATIONS.

OKAY, I'LL SEE YOU LATER, CATHY.

"LATER" AS IN "TONIGHT," OR "LATER" AS IN, "SOME-TIME IN THIS LIFETIME"?

OH, HA, HA. GIVE ME A CALL SOMETIME.

"GIVE YOU A CALL" AS IN "YOU RESPECT MY RIGHT TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE" OR, "GIVE YOU A CALL" AS IN "CALL ONLY WHEN YOU SPECIFICALLY ASK"?

YOU'RE A RIOT, CATHY. WELL, I'VE GOT TO GO.

"I'M A RIOT" AS IN, "YOU LOVE ME" OR "I'M A RIOT" AS IN, "WE JUST BROKE UP"?

MEN SHOULD COME WITH INSTRUCTION BOOKLETS.

CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP, IRVING?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I DON'T KNOW. DO YOU WANT THIS RELATIONSHIP?

I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT THIS RELATIONSHIP...

...BUT I ALSO DON'T KNOW THAT I DON'T WANT THIS... RELATIONSHIP. DO YOU WANT THIS RELATIONSHIP?

I DON'T KNOW.

...AT LEAST WE STILL HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.

CATHY CATHY GUISEWITE

SHE ASKED ME OUT AND I WENT OUT. DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT TONIGHT?

NO.

I CAN MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT NOW AND GET IT OVER WITH...

...OR I CAN PRETEND EVERYTHING IS FINE NOW AND SPEND THE NEXT SIX MONTHS PLOTTING AND SCHEMING A WEB OF REVENGE SO HIDEOUS YOU WILL RUE THE DAY YOU ANSWERED HER CALL !!!

OK.

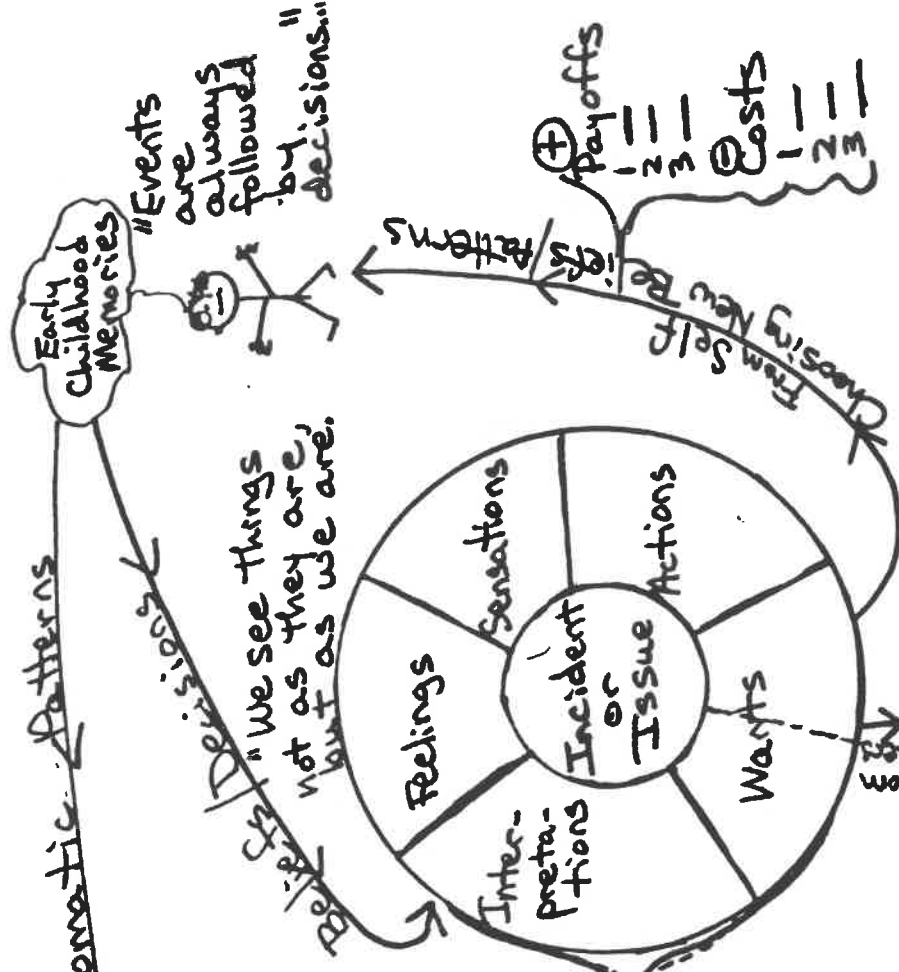
ISN'T THAT JUST LIKE A MAN TO PICK THE ONE THAT REQUIRES THE MOST WORK?

TIPS FOR CONNECTING  
(EVEN WHEN THE OTHER PERSON HASN'T READ THE BOOK  
OR TAKEN THE COURSE!)

1. Tune into your own experience by using your Awareness Wheel. By being clear about your feelings, interpretations and wants you'll be modeling good communication skills. If you do find something from your Wheel that you want to share with the other person, plan the gist of your message ahead of time. If you think you may have trouble staying in Straight Talk maybe it's a clue that this incident is fueled by an Early Childhood Incident and your behavior is part of a pattern you chose to cope with life as a small child. As an adult you can observe the consequences of your choice and may choose to experiment with new responses.
2. Use your knowledge of the parts of any experience to help you listen "actively" to the other person. Ask open ended questions such as "How did you feel?" "Why do you think this affected you the way it did?" "What are your guesses about why I did what I did?" "Are you aware of anything you'd like from me?" And then listen to the other person's experience without making any judgements or corrections.
3. Ask permission when you want to talk about something important. In this way, you give others choices, and choice is central to connecting. "I'd like to talk with you sometime about what happened at the party. Is this a good time?"
4. Be patient. It takes time for people to become open and trusting. Start to build your Straight Talk skills with the people you think will be most receptive. Save the tougher ones for later when it's easier for you to stay in Straight Talk rather than "follow the leader" to Small Talk or Control Talk.
6. Remember we humans learn best through imitation and modeling. You can be the leader and people will follow you into Straight Talk. Mark Twain said "Example is not the main thing that influences people - it's the only thing."
7. Acknowledge, then resist the temptation to use Control Talk to get someone to Straight Talk. Say "Sometimes I feel like doing anything - even if it hurts you, to make you talk to me, drive slower, send me flowers, do things my way, etc. I guess that's just a clue for me that this issue is so important to me that I need to give my best to finding a resolution we can both feel good about."

B:tipsst.irb

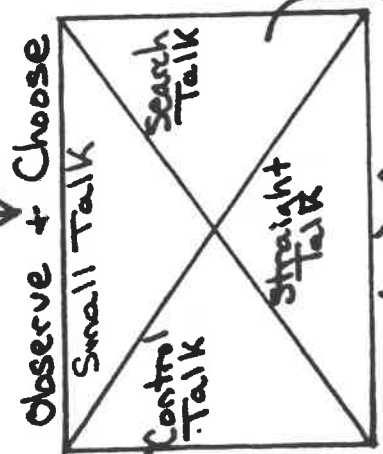
"I am the authority on my own experience."



Inner Critic/Judge

turned inward

"We see things not as they are, but as we are."



Connect with Yourself

I Count You Count

Complaints To Wants

Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Feeling \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretation \_\_\_\_\_

Want \_\_\_\_\_

Ground Rules

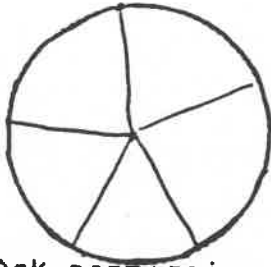
Inner Witness

Self-Responsible Statements

Intro To Ref. Bldg. LWJ 12/86

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WHAT'S YOUR INTENTION RIGHT NOW?

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| to clarify           | to ignore            |
| to be better than    | to explore           |
| to "go south"        | to refuse            |
| to support           | to stand up to (for) |
| to reveal            | to deny              |
| to conceal           | to disclose          |
| to confront          | to notice            |
| to acknowledge       | to appreciate        |
| to make wrong        | to rescue            |
| to withdraw          | to investigate       |
| to show caring       | to include           |
| to try on (an idea)  | to risk              |
| to express concern   | to divide            |
| to judge             | to dominate          |
| to avoid             | to create            |
| to involve           | to propose           |
| to search            | to wonder            |
| to introduce         | to check out         |
| to humor             | to encourage         |
| to design            | to discourage        |
| to dare              | to pay attention to  |
| to be liked          | to quiz              |
| to give direction    | to irritate          |
| to focus             | to approve           |
| to take sides        | to appreciate        |
| to expose            | to whine             |
| to learn             | to bully             |
| to compete           | to be the victim of  |
| to grieve            | to change            |
| to relax             | to knuckle down      |
| to move things along | to experiment        |
| to discipline        | to organize          |
| to bribe             | to compromise        |
| to frighten          | to let go            |
| to give              | to give space        |
| to take control      | to want              |
| to hurry             | to "go on automatic" |
| to get closer        | to incite            |
| to close in on       | to look for insight  |
| to present           | to connect           |
| to be grateful       | to get attention     |
| to complain          | to accept            |
| to be delighted      | to simplify          |
| to harmonize         | to communicate       |
| to threaten          | to hurt              |
| to show respect      | to surprise          |