



THE REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

Purpose:

- 1) To repair a relationship that functions poorly - weak connection, poor communication.
- 2) To assist one's ability to regain clarity in thinking about a "complex subject".
- 3) To help create an atmosphere of safety between two conflictual people so as to bring about the dissolution of their conflict, i.e. to dissolve the energy that fuels their conflict and allow them to communicate openly.

Duration:

Approximately 15-20 minutes.

Procedure:

1. The Invitation

One person (the Host) invites their partner (the Visitor) and makes an appointment with them to come and Cross the Bridge for a Visit to their world

2. "Presencing"

- a. The purpose of Presencing is to quiet the mental chatter and to "arrive" into the here and now.
- b. Host and Visitor sit in facing chairs with eyes approximately 18-inches (44 cm) apart.

3. Attitudes

- a. Visitor: curiosity, compassion, and present
- b. Host: Openness and vulnerability
- c. Willingness to communicate with each other and connect

4. **The Visitor's Preparation**

- a. Give yourself time to prepare for the Visit
- b. Leave your resentments and stories behind
- c. Remember that your differences are the clash of your and your Host's immaturities, and that you need to go to a higher level of relational maturity to dissolve them; your issues are an opportunity for growth!

5. **Speaking and Hearing**

- a. The Host speaks in manageable, digestible chunks and is direct, truthful, slow, clear, simple, and honest
- b. The Visitor fully hears and listens, learning the language of the Host's world by repeating what he/she had heard, and using the partner's words without interpretation or paraphrasing
- c. As the Host speaks, the Visitor responds compassionately with "*Have I got you?*"; and "*Tell me more*".

Note: Often only about 10% of the initial request for the Visit is about the present and the current issues, and 90% of the energy comes from the deeper layers from the past. Stay focused on the immediate topic.

6. **Listening and Acknowledgement**

The Visitor summarizes the essence of what he/she heard

7. **Understanding**

- a. Visitor "steps into his/her partner's shoes" and looks at the experience of the Host from the Host's perspective
- b. Visitor expresses their understanding of the Host's story and owns his/her contribution

Note: There is no judgment of right/wrong or guilt, only understanding and validation of the experience

8. **Empathy**

Visitor says to Host, "*and the way you might have been feeling is _____, and now you might be feeling _____.*"

Note: Use one or more 1-word answers to fill in the blanks; such as angry, anxious, strong, loving, connected...)

9. **Mutual Appreciation**

Both express their appreciation to the other for their respective contribution during the Visit

10. **Name Qualities of the Relational Space at the End of the Journey**

Assess the space between you and describe its qualities... hopefully closer to "connected" than "conflicted"

To learn more about Hedy and Yumi Schleifer and their relational work with couples, therapists, businesses and organizations, please visit:

www.HedyYumi.com or call 305-604-0010.