

10. THE SIX WAYS WE GET STUCK

What gets in the way of living relationally? We do. From time to time, usually when we are not getting what we want from our intimate relationship, most of us engage in very common, yet equally dysfunctional behaviours. These get in the way of what we really want from our partners, which is to be heard, to be known, to be connected. If you feel like your practice of Full Respect Living is stuck or deteriorating, chances are that you're getting in your own way. Discover why you might be stuck & which combination of these you may be using.

1. USING MISERY STABILISERS

Misery stabilisers are what we turn to instead of each other, instead of standing up and facing the issues. Some common examples are work, food, shopping, TV, alcohol/drugs, other people, affairs, over-involvement with children or pets, excessive use of the computer or internet etc. These "stabilisers" are a form of withdrawal and will compromise the quality of your relationships if they go unchecked.

2. NEEDING TO BE RIGHT

When we engage in needing to be right, nothing is more important than being right. When we're listening to our partner and she/he says something with which we disagree, we either interrupt to let them know that she/he is wrong (and why), or we spend the next several minutes thinking about how we're going to prove that she/he is wrong as soon as we get a chance to talk. In this case we're no longer listening.

When we need to be right, there's indignation just at or under the surface. This can sound like "**How dare you say (or think) that!**"... "**I can't believe you said that to me (or about me)!**"... "**How could you do this to me?**" Indignation takes needing to be right one step further, so that it's no longer just about my need to be right but also about what an idiot you are for saying or doing that.

3. CONTROLLING YOUR PARTNER

When we try to control our partner, we try to get them to do what we want. We can try to control them directly, as in making demands, or indirectly, as in manipulation. We can try to control them explicitly or implicitly, as with passive-aggressive behaviours (overt or covert manipulation). Whichever way we go, direct or indirect, explicit or implicit, we are setting ourselves up for failure. The only things that we can control are what we ourselves say or do. Although we can influence people, we cannot control them. Trying to control our partner is inappropriate. In fact, it's abusive. And although control may lead to compliance for now, it will not lead to a healthy, loving relationship. It generally leads to resentment. No one likes to be controlled and sooner or later, you will pay for your efforts.

4. UNBRIDLED SELF-EXPRESSION

When we take on this particular strategy, it's all about getting things off our chest. We tell our partner in no uncertain terms just how unhappy we are with them and just what we think of them. **You do not need to say everything that's on your mind.** This is not honesty, it's disrespectful. And **how** you say whatever it is you choose to say will make all the difference to your partner, the listener.

5. RETALIATION

This is about payback, revenge. Retaliation can be passive-aggressive and subtle or just plain aggressive in either small or dramatic ways.

6. WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal can be physical, as in physically leaving the room or storming out, or it can be psychological: "I'm in the room with you, but I am not connected to you. I've tuned you out".