Transforming Troubled Relationships: The Five Secrets of Effective Communication

Course Outline

Last Updated: March 19, 2021

# Introduction

Objectives:

* Motivate the course
* Provide an overview of the course
* Articulate course goals/objectives/outcomes

# Module 1: Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Objective: Describe the potential sources of relationship conflict and identify which one(s) may be contributing to your own problems with a significant other

Objectives:

* Review common explanations for relationship conflict
* Reflect on our motivations for getting close to significant others
* Describe various reasons why hate often wins out over love
* Explain the three basic interpersonal cognitive therapy principles of how to transform relationships

## Two Theories of Interpersonal Conflict

### Lack of Skills

### Mixed Motivations

## The Dark Side of Human Nature

## 12 Reasons Why We (Secretly) Love to Hate

### Power and Control

### Revenge

### Justice and Fairness

### Narcissism

### Pride and Shame

### Scapegoating

### Truth

### Blame

### Self-Pity

### Anger and Resentment

### Competition

### Hidden Agendas

## The Three Basic Principles of Cognitive Interpersonal Change

### 1. We Provoke and Maintain the Exact Relationship Problems We Complain About - But Don’t Realize It and Blame The Other Person

### 2. We Deny Our Own Role in The Conflict Because We’re Secretly Rewarded in Some Way and Self-Examination is Painful

### 3. We All Have the Power to Transform Troubled Relationships - If We Are Willing to Stop Blaming the Other Person and Change Ourselves

# Module 2: Assessing Your Relationship

Objective: Assess a current relationship problem you are having with a significant other and analyze the dynamics underneath it

Lesson Objectives:

* Measure the health of your relationship using the Relationship Satisfaction Journal
* Set a relationship improvement goal
* Clarify the advantages/benefits and disadvantages/costs of achieving your goal
* Analyze a recent interpersonal interaction using the Relationship Journal
* Articulate the common ingredients within any healthy interpersonal exchange
* Identify 2-3 communication errors you make that tend to produce more interpersonal friction

## How Good is Your Relationship?

## Setting Your Goal: What Do You REALLY Want?

### Maintain Status Quo

### End the Relationship

### Make the Relationship Better

## The Price of Rapport: How Much Are You Willing to Pay?

### Blame CBA

### The Dangers of Other-Blame and Self-Blame

### Transcending the Blame Game

## The Relationship Journal

### Q1: What did they say?

### Q2: What did you say?

### Q3: Was this an example of good or bad communication?

### Q4: What were the consequences?

### Q5: What might a more helpful response have been?

## The Three Ingredients of Good Communication

### Empathy

### Assertiveness

### Respect

## Common Communication Errors

### 18 Common Errors Chart

### Feeling Words Chart

## How We Force Others to Annoy Us

# Module 3: The Five Secrets of Effective Communication

Objective: Apply five "secrets" of effective communication to resolve the relationship problem you are experiencing now and ward off future problems

Lesson Objectives:

* Name and define the five secrets of effective communication
* Describe the disarming technique and explain why it is a useful communication tool
* Describe thought and feeling empathy and explain why they are useful communication tools
* Describe inquiry and explain why it is a useful communication tool
* Describe “I feel…” statements and explain why they are a useful communication tool
* Describe stroking and explain why it is a useful communication tool
* Identify two common errors in using each of the five secrets and offer recommendations of what to do instead that would be more effective

## Introduction to the Five Secrets

* Name and define the five secrets of effective communication

## Secret #1: The Disarming Technique

* Describe the disarming technique and explain why it is a useful communication tool

## Secret #2: Thought and Feeling Empathy

* Describe thought and feeling empathy and explain why they are useful communication tools

## Secret #3: Inquiry

* Describe inquiry and explain why it is a useful communication tool

## Secret #4: Asserting How “I Feel”

* Describe “I feel…” statements and explain why they are a useful communication tool

## Secret #5: Conveying Respecting for the Relationship

* Describe stroking and explain why it is a useful communication tool

## Common Traps - And How to Avoid Them

* Identify two common errors in using each of the five secrets and offer recommendations of what to do instead that would be more effective

### Disarming Errors

### Thought and Feeling Empathy Errors

### Inquiry Errors

### “I Feel” Errors

### Respect Errors

# Module 4: Putting the Five Secrets to Work

# Objective: Apply knowledge and skills learned in Modules 1-3 to increase our communication capacities and improve an interpersonal relationship in the real world

Lesson Objectives:

* Practice the Intimacy Exercise
* Practice the 1-Minute Drill with a Peer
* Apply the five secrets to your troubled relationship

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## Mastering The Five Secrets

## Peer Activity: The Intimacy Exercise

## Peer Activity: The 1-Minute Drill

## Trying it Out in the Wild

# Conclusion

## End-of-Course Recap

## Interpersonal Development Plan

## End-of-Course Survey