

# BECOMING BETTER INSTEAD OF BITTER IN RELATIONSHIPS

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## *KEYS TO COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION FOR COUPLES*

UNITED STATES, February 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As a Marriage and Family therapist for decades, My clients have been my best teachers. Using these lessons combined with research and study, I have found these key principles helpful in my work with couples:

- Use "we" statements to discuss what is in the best interest of both partners.
- Avoid "my way or the highway" verbiage.
- The brain loves the familiar, so look carefully at patterns you bring from your family of origin and how they become self-fulfilling prophecies.
- Do not do anything for your partner that he or she should be doing so you do not help them stay stuck in immaturity.
- Alcohol can flambé a relationship. Avoid arguments when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Make your relationship a safe place to be deeply honest with one another. Postpone discussion of differences if either of you becomes destructive. Take time-outs.
- Develop a toolbox of ways to calm down (e.g., prayer, meditation, exercise, music, etc.).
- Develop a toolbox of constructive communication techniques by talking about HOW you argue in order to avoid criticism, contempt, defensiveness, or stonewalling.
- Remember, you are not a paragon and need to be open to feedback about distasteful habits.
- Both partners play a part in a destructive dance. It usually backfires to assign blame to your partner and ask friends and family to don a black robe and become judges.
- Right-wrong games are counterproductive since no judge drops out of the sky to declare a winner.

- Be open to your partner's point of view and negotiate instead of acting like two opposing attorneys making their case.
  - If your goal is to be on the same team, it is not helpful to hit one another over the head with words.
  - Be flexible about change, and let go of rigid patterns that never worked from day one. Do not keep buying a ticket to reruns of destructive dramas.
  - Develop a positive emotional bank account by declaring one thing you appreciate about one another at the end of each day. These add up, and when you make withdrawals during bad times, you maintain a positive balance in the bank.
- A great relationship is a growing machine. We can help one another become better or bitter. According to psychologist Carol Dweck for Stanford University when we have a "growth mindset" we can improve in meaningful ways. In the best relationships, couples learn to turn a mess into a message.

BIO:

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