

## Communication

Communication is a process where individuals exchange their ideas, needs, thoughts, and feelings. It is also the process of sharing information, ideas, and understanding attitudes between individuals. Effective communication addresses boundaries, traumas, and an understanding of limitations in a person's ability to give to you (give and receive).

Effective communication skills look like:

- Compassion
- Personal connections
- Trust
- Verbal communication
- Active listening
- Written communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Education

The solid foundation of communication in relationships is self-awareness (understanding self), building personal trust, and trust in relationships.

Good communication skills overcome obstacles, creates solid connections in relationships, better understanding between individuals, and fundamentally builds trust.

The truth is that the reason why we have poor communication in relationships is that we don't trust each other. When you feel safe with someone, you will openly be vulnerable and expressive without the fear of judgment and lack of understanding.

In a healthy relationship, the person observes the communication (verbal and non-verbal) and registers how he/she needs to connect to you.

Become aware of the following 4 trauma responses in communication:

- Reactive
- Codependent
- Attachment
- Need for validation

- 1) Reactive - When you are reactive you are not actively listening to the information that is coming to you. You are most likely making an assumption, and you need to be right and therefore you will go to war in the relationships that you have. This is a trauma response because your nervous system is overstimulated and you are not processing what is being said to you. You feel it is an attack on you.

- 2) Codependent - Codependency feels like an emotional rollercoaster. You create fantasies and ideas about what the relationship potential could be. There are no facts and you lose yourself in the relationship. You can develop anxieties and feel addicted to the partner that you're with/person in the relationship. Communication styles look like avoidance, dysfunctional boundaries, shame, and control.
- 3) Attachment - Attachment styles create trauma bonds in relationships. There will be over-explaining of other people's behavior patterns, justifying, enabling, and silent treatments in order to have control over the person's emotional response.
- 4) Need for validation - overextending their energy. The constant need to be seen and heard. It's about themselves (their pain). Will do anything to seek someone's approval.

How to Communicate Effectively:

Become aware of the four styles above and notice which one of them is dominant in your personality. You may operate with all four types at different times and situations.

Reactive:

Can you find understanding in what is being communicated to you?

Can you stick to the facts of a situation?

Can you process the information or do you need to communicate that you need time to cool down so that you are grounded?

What does this reaction remind you of from your childhood? Who would have the same reactions?

Why do you get defensive?

Are you in a toxic situation or pattern that keeps bringing up past pain and traumas?

Are you aware that you are attracting these relationships to help you shift your ability to preserve your energy and not give your power away? (when you get reactive in a toxic situation with a person who is also not understanding you, there is usually a power struggle)

Do you need to give your power away?

Do you need to be right and try and force the person to try and understand you?

Can you let go of toxic relationships and find individuals who are calm, understanding and who will help you understand yourself?

Phrases to use while shifting this behaviour:

"I feel I am getting very upset right now. I need some time to process this and I'll get back to you."

"I see you are upset. I hear you and understand how you feel. I just need some time to understand why I'm feeling overly stimulated right now."

"I see we keep repeating the same argument. I may not be willing to let go of the need to be right and wanting you to see that you have hurt me. Maybe we need a couples therapist or someone to mediate this situation."

"I do not think we are willing to understand each other. Maybe it's best we let go of this toxic cycle or behaviour. This is the end of this relationship"

### Codependency:

Are you aware of your emotional extremes?

Do you have an addictive personality?

Do you feed off of other's moods or chaos?

Do you involve yourself in other's situations and make them your own?

Do you take everything personally?

Do you have a hard time with criticism?

Do you create unrealistic expectations?

Do you daydream or fantasize?

Do you project your trauma?

Do you avoid confrontation?

Are you a serial dater and obsess over the need of having a soul mate?

Do you pay attention to red flags in a relationship?

Phrases to use while shifting this behaviour:

"I really need to take my time to get to know you and understand myself in this relationship. Please tell me your boundaries and needs clearly so that I do not violate them or my own."

"I'm sorry, I really need time to focus and get grounded so that I do not spiral into a story and take what you are communicating to me personally."

"Do you need my help to fix this or do you just need me to listen and be supportive?"

"I hear you are frustrated with something that I have done. Can you please give me an example so I can shift this behaviour?"

### Attachment:

Do you tend to lean on relationships that you feel have similar traumas as your own?

Do you feel happiest at the beginning of a relationship?

Does your life revolve around the relationship?

Do you cut off friendships when you are in a relationship?

Do you hyper focus on their needs?

Do you make up excuses for your relationship and partner especially around toxic behaviours?

Do you need to have control over the individual?

Phrases to use while shifting this behaviour:

“I need to hold you accountable for what you need to heal within yourself as I work through my own trauma as well.”

“I cannot be responsible for your actions or behaviours. Please understand that they are emotionally upsetting me and the individuals around you.”

“Please understand that I love spending time with you but I also need to spend time with my family and my friends. I cannot isolate myself in a relationship.”

“I can be controlling when I'm triggered and feel unsafe. Please hold me accountable so I don't project that as your responsibility.”

Validation:

Do you need to feel like you are perfect and need individuals to constantly stop and give you praise?

Do you feel like you need a sense of belonging?

Do you feel you need to constantly prove yourself?

Do you change who you are to fit in?

Do you get easily angered when you are not getting seen for all your efforts?

Do you have high expectations that individuals will never be able to meet?

Do you often feel depressed and sad?

Do you bottle up your feelings and disassociate?

Do you constantly need someone to focus all their attention on you?

Phrases to use while shifting this behaviour:

“What can I offer you at this time that will make you feel seen by me?”

“I have unrealistic expectations due to my trauma. I do not expect you to meet them. I just need you to help me when I start to spiral in my thoughts of doing too much.”

“I have to set limits on how much I expense my energy. Unfortunately, I cannot help you with that.”

“When I'm emotionally upset, I need to express it right away but maybe you may not be ready to process it. I will take some time to write it out first and understand what I really need to express to you without emotionally dumping on you.”

To have healthy communication in your relationships, you have to understand yourself and others around you.

