

Mindful Dialogue Structure & Negotiation

Part 1

A: "When I think about (neutral observation/event) right now, I feel (only 1 or 2 feelings), because of my need for (only 1 or 2 needs), (Doesn't speak for more than two minutes) then makes connecting request:

- *"Can you tell me what you heard?"*

B: Reflects back what s/he heard and then asks: *"Did I get it? Is there more?"*

A: Confirms, or if needed s/he clarifies and repeats and/or reveals another core feeling and need related to the initial observation and then makes connecting request:

- *"Can you tell me what you heard?"*

B: Reflects back anything new that is said or anything s/he didn't reflect back the first time then asks: *"Did I get it?"*

A: Clarifies and/or confirms and then makes connecting request that **shifts the focus to B's experience:**

- *"Can you tell me what feelings and needs come up for you hearing me?"*

Part 2

B: "When I hear you just now, I feel (only 1 or 2 feelings), because of my need for (only 1 or 2 needs), (Doesn't speak for more than two minutes) then makes connecting request:

- *"Can you tell me what you heard?"*

A: Reflects back what s/he heard and then asks: *"Did I get it? Is there more?"*

B: Confirms, or if needed s/he clarifies and repeats and/or reveals another core feeling and need related to hearing his or her partner and then makes connecting request:

- *"Can you tell me what you heard?"*

A: Reflects back anything new that is said or anything s/he didn't reflect back the first time then asks: *"Did I get it?"*

B: Clarifies and/or confirms and then asks if the other person is ready to hear his or her feelings and needs related to the initially named observation.

Part 3

B: “When I think about (neutral observation/event) right now, I feel (only 1 or 2 feelings), because of my need for (only 1 or 2 needs), (Doesn’t speak for more than two minutes) then makes connecting request:

- “Can you tell me what you heard?”

A: Reflects back what s/he heard and then asks: “Did I get it? Is there more?”

B: Confirms, or if needed s/he clarifies and repeats and/or reveals another core feeling and need related to the initial observation and then makes connecting request:

- “Can you tell me what you heard?”

A: Reflects back anything new that is said or anything s/he didn’t reflect back the first time then asks: “Did I get it?”

B: Clarifies and/or confirms and then asks if the other person is ready to negotiate specific requests so that all needs can be met in this particular situation or in a future similar situation.

Action Requests: When both people have expressed that their need for being heard has been met, you know that all needs are “on the table”.

If there is not a sense of connection between you, then back up and ask what hasn’t been heard or take a time out for self-empathy if reactivity is interfering with empathic connection.

- The process of brainstorming action requests begins when you feel connected and heard.
- Action requests are made so that all needs expressed can be met.
- Action requests are concrete and do-able, as such they include a specific time, place, and action.
- You may find that the action request you had in mind before the dialogue, shifts once you are more connected with yourself and your partner

Here are key elements that make it easier to negotiate specific do-able action requests:

- Only make a request for the next time you are in the relevant situation.
- Look for an action request that can be completed in the present moment like affection, words of reassurance, providing information, offering empathy.
- Imagine that you are going to take a baby step towards meeting the named needs in the relevant context rather than meeting the needs to full satisfaction indefinitely.
- Say to yourself, this request is just an experiment, it’s okay if we are not sure about it working or not.
- Don’t rely on memory or will power to follow through with a request. Set up a support structure to make sure you can do it. For example, you might set an alert on your phone, you might send yourself an email or text, etc.