Appendix B

Puzzle It Out—A Better Way to Communicate

Whether it's couples coming in for help or individuals lamenting past or current relationship problems, "we just don't know how to communicate" is a refrain counselors of all types hear over and over again. Self-help authors are continually creating and re-creating approaches to help people deal with their differences when problematic issues arise. All of these authors share a common goal of helping their readers respectfully present their point of view and respectfully receive the viewpoint of their relationship partner.

As I've explained in Part II, mature love between adults is characterized by what Erik Erikson calls "mutuality." By this he means that the other person's well-being matters to you just as much as your own and you behave accordingly. There are three major underminers of mutuality where communication is concerned: biology, competing or misplaced priorities where time is concerned, and entitlement. These enemies of love are sneaky and it's important to understand them so you can defeat them. "Forewarned is forearmed."

UNDERMINER OF MUTUALITY: THE BIOLOGY OF FIGHT/FLIGHT/FREEZE/FOLD (COLLAPSE)

It's that key word "respectfully" that's so hard to accomplish since at the very first hint that we're not getting something we want, it seems to be human nature to automatically shift into self-protective and/or competitive mode. We even go on the attack. Actually, it's not human nature so much as it is our *animal* nature. Realizing that fact and counteracting it is more than half the battle toward communicating better.

In biological terms, when fulfillment of a moderate or strong desire seems in jeopardy our brain and body go from one part of our nervous system—the part that facilitates social engagement—to another more primitive part whose sole agenda is survival (see note 6 for Chapter 5 on the work of Stephen Porges). Animals don't respect each other. Through instinct and experience they may come to recognize another's superior cunning or strength and bow to it, but that's not respect in the human sense. Encarta Dictionary says respect involves thoughtfulness, consideration and "deferential admiration." Deferential means being polite, courteous, even submissive. So to respect another person with whom you have an issue means to remain polite while you submit to hearing each other's point of view so both of you can take both of you into consideration appropriately. The trouble is that if you've gone down the

"DANGER!" neurological pathway, this stance of openness to influence is already badly compromised. When the primitive brain's fight/flight/freeze/fold (fold = collapse) program takes over, our "thinking brain" is either off-line or being used in service to the goal of defeating, escaping from, or pacifying the person perceived as a threat or not cooperating.

My point is that any perceived threat to getting what you desire automatically triggers "Issue! React!" just as instinctively as the dog, Doug, in the movie *UP* freezes, points, and shouts "SQUIRREL!" Our animal nature hijacks our higher potential as human beings and once we shift from an all-is-well mode into that protect-and-defend mode things go downhill fast in the communication department. The defensive reaction can be to argue (fight), or to abandon one's self and just accommodate the other person without making any effort to be taken into account (freeze/collapse/submit). These biological reflex actions don't build or sustain trust.

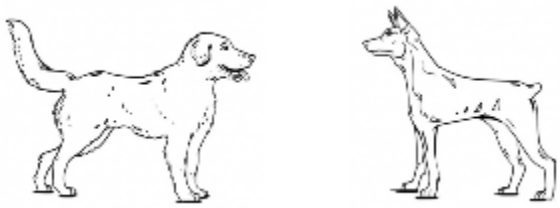
The only solution I know of is to try and put a circuit breaker at the brain's junction box between the two neurological options—the social engagement and the fight/flight/freeze/fold paths. **The only way to accomplish *that* is to firmly establish ahead of time that you are both physically and emotionally safe in this relationship.** If you haven't been safe in previous family or couple relationships because the other person *hasn't* been committed to your well-being, this new belief will be hard to come by. But it's absolutely central to your hope of being able to communicate with each other instead of automatically protecting yourself by arguing, withdrawing, or submitting.

I'm going to repeat that because it's the cornerstone of everything else I'm going to say here. If two people want to learn to communicate effectively with each other, ground rules that establish the physical and emotional safety of both people have to be in place at the start and both of you have to be committed to them. As Sherod and Phyllis Miller explain in their excellent communications materials available from Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc., both people (i.e. everyone involved) have to start from an "I count; you count" premise. That's the essence of Erikson's definition of mutuality and the central affirmation of my definition of love: you matter to me. And if you matter to me, I want first of all to protect you *even from myself* and second, to fully understand the issue from your point of view. Only then can I take you into account appropriately.

Establishing the ground rule promise to rein yourself in and force yourself to go into "curious and exploring mode" rather than "attack and defend mode" is absolutely essential. And anytime either of you notices your own blood pressure reaching the red zone or senses the other is tipping over into the danger zone (relationship gurus John and Julie Gottman call it flooding), you simply HAVE TO take time out to get your physiology back into the social engagement system. THAT's the only way empathy, understanding, and creative problem solving take place.

Sometimes in the midst of a heated communication session one person's intense desire to resolve the issue may make it difficult to allow the other person to step away from the engagement. This may be especially true if that person has made a habit of just walking out on difficult discussions in the past, never returning to resolve the issue. The Gottmans recommend agreeing to a ten minute time-out during which time the flooded party or parties focus attention on something else entirely such as a crossword puzzle or reading an amusing magazine article. This refocusing of attention is an important part of cooling down one's physiological arousal. One of the safety ground rules should be that both people will respect either person's call for a time out. Another ground rule is the promise to return to the discussion after the time out.

It really is that cut and dried. The problem is that most of us don't want to do it. We're not motivated enough to restrain our inner Dobermans and rely on our inner Golden Retrievers.



So how do you establish that kind of confidence that you're safe? Only through consistent, repeated experiences of respectfully hearing each other out and taking each other into account. That's the devotion strand of the three-stranded braid that makes up genuine love, explained in Chapter 1. You make it a rule of life between the two of you that mutuality is going to prevail in your relationship and then you develop habits of explaining yourself thoroughly and listening to each other attentively, habits that make it a reality. You both commit to paying attention to the Matter Meter, explained in Chapter 4, making sure you never act like you can take your partner or leave them—that is, like they no longer matter. Slipping back into self-centeredness is human nature, but you make a decision to not let yourself go down that road. You make mutuality such a fundamental shared value that each of you has permission to send up a signal flag if selfishness rears its ugly head or the Doberman starts bearing its teeth or growling. That signal flag would be saying "I'm sensing that you (or I) just shifted into fight mode (or flight mode or give up mode). I'd like us to take a breather."

If maintaining mutual love is the deepest desire of both hearts, you'll be motivated to learn the skills for taking each other into account and you'll exercise the necessary self-discipline required for communicating effectively: both the speaking and the listening parts. As you accumulate experiences of taking each other into account appropriately, your trust in this particular relationship will grow and you'll become more able to rein in the impulse to defend yourself or go on the counter-attack.

UNDERMINER OF MUTUALITY: SHORTAGE OF TIME

Shortage of time—or at least perceived shortage of time—seems to be one of the most dangerous enemies of mutuality. If you want the other person to understand where you're coming from, you need to be able to lay the issue out on the table clearly and thoroughly—so they can learn how you see it. Before you can do that, you have to sort yourself out and understand the factors shaping your reactions and desires where a particular issue is concerned. If you've sorted yourself out pretty well ahead of time using the technique below, it probably won't take a lot of the other person's time to hear you out. Sometimes all we truly want is to be respectfully heard and, hopefully, understood. If you develop a true partnership of mutuality, you may even become each other's facilitators in figuring yourselves out.

Of course if the issue is an interpersonal one, that is, if there's an issue between the two of you, more time will be needed for the other person to be heard on the issue, as well. Only then can you allow mutual influence to take place rather than mere turf protection. We don't create or devote that kind of time unless we really do believe that taking both of us into account is the only way to love well, the only way to protect a relationship we treasure. As the authors of *A General Theory of Love* state, "relationships live on time." (See note 2 for Chapter 6.)

The implications are unavoidable: any relationship deprived of time will begin to deteriorate.

ENTITLEMENT AND/OR THE REPAIR OF EARLIER WRONGS

When you start identifying the puzzle pieces in the desires category described below, you may very well come up against your own or the other person's hidden sense of being entitled to having a want or need fulfilled. In legal terms that means you act as if you have a right to it which creates a hierarchy over other people. That's the opposite of mutuality which assumes the wants and needs of both people have equal claim for being taken into account.

A sense of entitlement comes in many versions. Some of them are rooted in having had certain childhood needs met a little too well and being overly indulged. In these cases we believe we're "God's gift to the world" and therefore deserve special treatment. As a result we very naturally and complacently carry into adulthood our assumption of privileged status and continue to operate out of it.

Other versions are rooted in the exact opposite experiences, i.e being neglected or injured earlier in life. In these cases our unhealed wounded self lives on, secretly or not so secretly longing for safety and to have its needs finally met. Often in these cases we developed strategies for coping and protecting ourselves as best we could through pleasing and accommodating others; belittling ourselves or invalidating our own needs; taking it out on others weaker than ourselves; overly empathizing with others in any effort to form a connection; imitating other people's aggressive behaviors in the attempt to protect ourselves or get the reparation we think we deserve. Many of these strategies are implemented automatically later in life. We often act as if the current loved one did the harm and ought to make restitution.

When we have unresolved issues from our past, the ways of thinking, feeling and acting from that earlier situation function like little sub-personalities or parts of self. Think of them as "apps" on your smartphone created or downloaded (by watching others in real life or on various media) at earlier times in your life and never up-dated. It doesn't take much of a touch on the touchscreen to launch them. When we get hijacked by these wounded or protective parts of self ("brain apps"), we become blind and deaf to the requirements of mutual regard in the present. Although overly simplified, the movie *Inside/Out* portrays it well: one part of you might be saying sadly "It's hopeless to think I'll ever matter" and another part is shouting angrily "Are you kidding?!It's MY TURN!!" And to the extent we do think about it, we feel justified in our actions. In a sense, however, we're thinking with the brain of the three-year-old or eight-year-old who created the original app. When we're in the grips of a hijacking brain app, we've lost touch with our most adult self's belief in and commitment to mutuality within this adult relationship.

The more arrogant form of entitlement is fairly easy to recognize and expose because it's blatant. The "poor me" disguise is more insidious and hidden and is more difficult for others to address since having it named is usually experienced as wounding. It doesn't seem fair that so many of us reach adulthood burdened with one of the forms of entitlement, but it's a reality. Try and remain open to signs that you, too, may need to guard against this underminer (within yourself) of genuine mutual regard.

SUBSTANCE USE….AND ABUSE

There's one last thing that needs to be said before we get to the "how to" of puzzling out an issue. Our ability to communicate respectfully and effectively is often undermined by consuming alcohol, marijuana or other substances for the sake of helping us relax and unwind. Many people turn to alcohol and drugs at a young age to dull or escape the pain of neglect or abuse. Others develop the habit while in high stress jobs from which they want to down-shift quickly—Emergency Medicine staff and surgeons, firefighters and police, high-stake investment professionals, business CEOs, members of the military, and others. Still others turn to mind and mood-altering substances out of boredom with life. Whatever the motivation, these folks often build up a high tolerance for their substance of choice and have a hard time recognizing the negative effects on their relationships.

If you're one of these individuals, it's important to realize that when you're under the influence—even when you "feel fine"—you are far more likely to get hijacked by your brain's less-than-respectful apps. You're far less likely to be able to puzzle out your issues well or to effectively hear the other person's puzzle. While substances may temporarily dull whatever tension you seek to escape, your cognitive clarity and emotional self-control become dulled as well. That means you become less safe to communicate with, and please remember my earlier point that safety is essential for effective communication. Even if you do no visible harm, you're definitely far less likely to remember the conversation accurately and benefit from any empathy, insights, or resolves that emerged from it.

If you're feeling defensive right now just reading this section, it's a fairly good sign you have a reactive part of self (possibly from your teen years) rising up against being told what to do and what not to do. If your loved ones really do matter to you, you'll recognize your defensiveness as probably confirmation that you're in denial about your substance use and there's a problem. Please take that warning signal to heart. It's time to stop pretending your substance of choice is harmless since it's robbing your loved one of your best self and of the safety you promised them. Do whatever you have to do to break off the relationship with your substance so that you can love well the person to whom you've made commitments.

WHEN ISSUES ARISE….

In my experience of myself, my friends, and my clients, issues arise primarily when we don't get something we desire. Whether a desire is a true need or "just a want" is a matter of interpretation, of course, and as I explained in chapter 11, a helpful way to distinguish between them is to ask "What bad thing do I believe will happen if this desire isn't fulfilled?" If the answer reveals something that clearly undermines your physical, emotional or spiritual well-being, it's probably reasonable to put it in the need category. Maybe not everyone would need it, but you do. If nothing particularly awful is likely should the desire go unmet, put it in the category of a want, i.e. optional. Of course we can all use this distinction to manipulate others if we choose to, but I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt: you're striving toward true mutuality, neither over- nor under-inflating the importance of the desire involved in a particular situation.

THE ISSUE PUZZLE:
HOW TO "PUZZLE IT OUT"

There are many readily available images and methods for sorting out issues, often including various wheels of awareness like those of the Millers (presented in *Connecting*) and Dr. Dan Siegel, promoter of mindfulness training. You can readily find information about these online. I offer clients and students the following technique of finding pieces of the inner puzzle and putting them together.

When you're feeling mixed up or irritated or overwhelmed by an issue, this is a way to make some sense of what's going on inside. It may be an issue that involves just you or it may involve other people. Picture the issue, whatever it is, as a jigsaw puzzle you're pouring out of your brain onto the table. There's no box with a picture on it to guide you. Some of the pieces are face up and others are face down. The ones that are face up are the factors you're already consciously aware of even though you may not yet understand how they relate to each other. For instance, you already know you're angry; no surprise about that! Or you already know what set you off was stepping in dog poop in the yard. Or maybe you already know you're agitated because you want to go to a party, but you have a big assignment due tomorrow. Those are helpful starting places. Go ahead and name them. Jot them down.

But a lot of the times, we know we're anxious (piece facing up), but we aren't consciously aware yet of what's causing it (pieces facing down). Or we have to make a decision and don't know what matters to us most. Or we've learned a new piece of information and can't figure out what we want to do about it. The task is to turn over the pieces, discover what's on them and see how they fit together.

When you start an issue puzzle, there are several types of pieces to look for:

- desires (wants or needs);
- data from your five senses (see, hear, taste, touch, smell), intuition, and facts;
- feelings; and
- thoughts of various sorts such as interpretations, expectations, beliefs, opinions, etc.

If you're like me, you look for the edge pieces first when you start a puzzle so you can put the frame together. You can start anywhere, really, but it can be especially helpful to identify the point in time when the issue appeared. Pick up the remote control on the movie of your life and play it backwards until you can see the instant at which the issue showed itself. Whether in a big or small way there came a moment when you were unsettled. It's the moment at which you could and perhaps should have said, "Houston, we have a problem." Maybe you did say it to yourself or even to someone else at the time. In their communication materials referenced above, the Millers call it the point you feel a "pinch", a physiological signal that something's wrong. Many people describe a sudden twist, tug or wrenching in their gut while others report a tightening of neck or shoulder muscles. You probably know your own most common physical signal very well.

Movie directors are masters at showing their audience the pinch. Often the soundtrack signals it the instant the character sees, hears, touches, smells, or tastes something that triggers a thought, feeling, desire, etc. It may be subtle or blatant, but the actor lets us know by behaviors, facial expressions, body language, tone of voice or spoken words that an internal event has taken place. Given this explanation, most of my clients can do a replay of a morning, day, week, or even longer period of time and identify the point at which an issue arose.

Even if you don't understand exactly what happened, you can identify the timeframe when something changed in your mood or mindset and that's a very useful piece of information. So to begin an issue puzzle, look back and find the "pinch". That's the point to start watching your internal replay closely so you can identify puzzle pieces and get clues about the bigger picture.

What did you see, hear, smell, touch (feel via your skin), or taste just before the pinch? Those are puzzle pieces, too. Realize that you may have different data available to you than another person involved in the situation. If you share what you saw or heard, for instance, your reaction may make more sense to them.

Ask yourself what emotions shot through you or gradually emerged as the issue developed in your head—and in your body since emotions have physiological counterparts. Label as many puzzle pieces as you need for these emotion words, each with one separate emotion on it. (Most emotions are identifiable in one word. And please note that any time you say "I feel that xyz" you're actually identifying a thought. It's a widespread habit of speech that's very misleading. Push yourself to identify the one word emotion(s) that a particular thought activated.) Zero to ten, how strong was the emotion? Has that changed over time? Happy, sad, angry, afraid and disgusted are the core emotions and there are infinite nuances to each one. I've put a list of emotions at the end of this appendix and you can easily find more extensive lists online to help you broaden your awareness of emotional nuances. (Unfortunately, not all of those lists do a good job of distinguishing between emotions and thoughts.)

Now ask yourself what thoughts went through your mind. This will probably tell you where each of those emotions came from. Generally, we feel what we feel because we're thinking what we're thinking. This old saying isn't 100% accurate since the most primitive emotions like anger and fear arise from our most primitive survival brain and happen almost

instantaneously, split-seconds before the more evolved thinking brain has time to do its thing. (Then, of course, we feed that initial primitive spark with thoughts.) But for our purposes here, it works to think of emotions as triggered and fueled by thoughts. So ask yourself what you thought when you experienced an issue show up on your internal landscape. How did you interpret the data? Did you assume anything? Did you expect something different? Did you form a judgment or evaluation? For instance, if I see the sink full of dishes and interpret that as meaning my daughter's been on the phone with her boyfriend all evening, I might feel irritated. If I see the very same thing, but remember my daughter got a phone call from her aunt who needed a babysitter at the last minute, I might feel no irritation at all. So for each emotion puzzle piece, figure out as many contributing thoughts as you can. If you chase down "thought" with a synonym finder you'll see that belief, opinion, idea, judgment, theory, assumption, interpretation, analysis, and many other types of thoughts can show up as puzzle pieces.

With some pieces joined together now, the picture is probably becoming clearer, but keep going. See if you can identify similar situations in your past with this person or other people that help explain your strong reaction to the current appearance of this issue. These memories would go in the thought category also. It's pretty common for us to overreact emotionally when something happens that awakens unfinished business from the past. I ask my clients "How old did you feel when that emotion shot through you?" Eight? Three? Fifteen? "Who were you reacting to at that point in your life?" If you had especially difficult experiences earlier in life and didn't have much emotional support at the time, you probably have undigested emotions lying around inside your brain and body waiting to be reactivated. These, too, are like those apps on your touchscreen I mentioned earlier. When an experience today is reminiscent of the old wound, the well-practiced way of handling it often takes over. Sometimes it's the "I'm wounded" app, but very often it's a set of reactive emotions, thoughts and actions by which you coped as best you could back then. If you experience anger, sadness, fear, shame or guilt out of proportion to the current situation, there's a good chance you've been hijacked by a younger part of yourself. A book called *Parts Work* by Tom Holmes is an excellent introduction to this way of thinking about ourselves.
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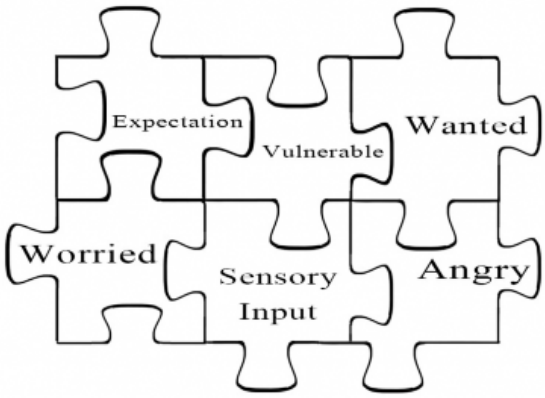


In the "thoughts" category, I find that expectations very often cause pinches. As Fred Luskin points out in his various works on forgiveness, a great many grievances arise from having unenforceable rules, i.e. set ideas about the way everyone ought to do life.[2]

It can be a small thing like "the right way" to cut carrots for Thanksgiving dinner or something much larger such as how long you're "supposed to" keep a car before buying a new one. Usually, we don't know someone had a rule or expectation until we've inadvertently broken

it and “gotten in trouble,” a phrase that already signals someone in the parent role and the other person in a child role—never a good sign when mutual regard is the goal. When this happens, a quick tool I’ve shared with clients is to answer the following question:

- Exactly what was the rule that was broken?
- Who made this rule?
- What purpose did that rule serve?
- What person did that rule serve when it came into being?
- What positive thing(s) would be lost (and by whom) if the rule were revised or dropped?
- What positive thing(s) might be gained (and by whom) if the rule were revised or dropped?

Arguments can often be defused by having a habit of non-defensively providing the answers to these questions when someone has tripped over an unspoken rule. The answers almost invariably show either the wisdom of the rule, its obsolescence and/or foolishness, or the self-interest hidden within it.

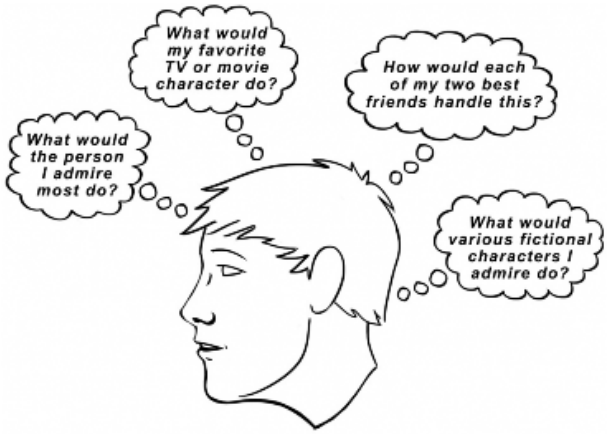
At any time as you’re puzzling out an issue, insights and connections can come out of nowhere—as if puzzle pieces flip over of their own accord and show you how they fit into the picture. And it can help to have another person work on the puzzle with you since they can point out connections you may not be able to easily see. The more you trust the other person, the more open you’ll be to benefiting from their possible insights.

As I’ve already mentioned, many issues appear because you didn’t get something you desired or you got something you desired *not* to have. For these puzzle pieces identify: What did you want or need to happen instead of what happened? What did you want or need not to happen that did happen? What do you want or need to happen in the future that seems jeopardized by what has happened? When it’s an interpersonal issue, the Gottmans advise giving the other person a “recipe” for how to make you happier. It’s not that you’re entitled to it, but it can be enormously helpful to articulate clearly what you’d like. Even the people who love us well and pay attention aren’t mind readers and it’s unfair and unhelpful to make them guess. In addition, requiring yourself to state it can help you realize you give mixed messages at times, possibly because you have conflicting wants within yourself, a situation that puts your loved one in a real bind.

The Gottmans also point out helpfully that some issues arise because whatever’s happening has implications for larger life dreams that are competing or in conflict. This can be multiple desires competing within one individual—some of which are compatible with each other and some of which may be mutually exclusive—or the competing dreams of two individuals in relationship with each other. Often the relational tension exists because neither person has yet articulated and dealt with their own multiple competing dreams! These are also very important pieces to the picture puzzle jumble that was in your head.

Whether you set out to just understand yourself better or to explain yourself to someone else, it's essential to see the desires, thoughts, feelings and data that make up the puzzle of you. Only then can you make an action plan that fits if one is needed.

When it comes to brainstorming possible action plans for yourself or for the two of you if it's a relational issue, I encourage my clients to think outside the box created by their past experience of themselves. To do this, pick five people you know (or even characters from history, public life, TV, film or novels) whose personalities and life experiences are very different from your own. Ask yourself what each of them might do in this situation and make a list of those options without pre-judging what comes to mind. After you've generated the list in this wide-open manner, consider those options from the standpoint of your value system and practical considerations. You may be surprised to discover some options open to you that you wouldn't have thought of otherwise.



When the time comes for sharing your puzzle with another person, keep in mind that if there's any kind of power struggle going on in a relationship, both people tend to listen defensively. In any issue that arises, each automatically assumes the other is trying to gain control. It will build trust in the relationship to "show your hand" at the outset, that is, go ahead and reveal what it is you want up front so the other person isn't distracted by trying to figure out what you're leading up to, i.e. "the catch." For instance, you might say "I'd like 'such and such' to happen and here's how I'm thinking about it." Or "I'm leaning towards X where 'such and

such' is concerned. I'd like to explain what's influencing me and hear the factors influencing you about it." Or you could say "I've been thinking about X and realize I have some strong feelings about it. I know you may have some strong feelings about it, too. I'd like to tell you where I'm coming from and hear what's influencing you. Either of us can go first." Then share what puzzling it out has shown you. (Once you establish and create these good communication habits with each other, you'll be able to drop some of the explanatory phrases that can seem pretty formal at first.)

Undoubtedly, puzzling out an issue in this way is time-consuming and it can be messy. You won't need to bother with it unless an issue is complicated or you're faced with a decision that is particularly important to you and you want to be thorough in thinking it through. If it helps you take yourself and/or a loved one into account in a more meaningful way, it's worth the time and effort.

EMOTIONS

Many of us have a very limited awareness of emotions and may only be able to recognize that we (or others) are happy, sad, angry, afraid or disgusted—the big five, rooted in brain biology. (I've also met people who can't accurately recognize even these.) When a child isn't helped to regulate their emotions in the first year or two of life by an attuned and steady nurturer, they tend to just develop On/Off buttons in their brain to protect them from the overwhelming experience of "too much" of these core emotions. Relying on the Off button a lot, they don't learn to recognize the nuances of milder versions of the feeling in themselves or in other people. For instance, such a person will see little signs of irritation in another person and jump to the conclusion that the person is extremely angry since they didn't learn what the nuances look or feel like.

It's easy to find lists of emotion words online so my goal in providing this beginner's list is to give you a kind of gradient to help you identify for yourself and a loved one "where you are" on some emotions that tend to cause relational problems. Some might disagree with where I've put words on the gradients, but at least they'll give you a starting place as you work on your puzzles.

Sadness

Unhappy
Gloomy
Discouraged
Sad
Depressed
Lonely
Demoralized
Miserable
Desolate
Devastated

Confusion

Puzzled
Confused
Awkward
Doubtful
Uncertain
Mixed up
At sea
Mystified
Unsure
Disoriented

Embarrassment

Sheepish
Embarrassed
Unprepared (an evaluation)
Pathetic (an evaluation)
Worthless (an evaluation)
Ashamed
Humiliated

Disgust (toward a person)

Dismissive
Disdainful
Belittling
Jaded
Scornful
Condescending
Contemptuous
Utterly disgusted
Filled with loathing

Disappointment

Hurt
Disappointed
Left out
Wounded
Offended
Crushed
Heart-broken
Indignant (w/ anger)
Wronged
Betrayed

Anger
Irritated
Irked
Annoyed
Cranky
Aggravated
Angry
Resentful
Vicious
Furious
Enraged

Fear

Uneasy
Timid
On edge
Hesitant
Cautious
Vigilant
Afraid
Alarmed
Terrified
Petrified

Anxiety

Uneasy
Jittery
Nervous
Concerned
Anxious
Worried
Troubled
Tense
Stressed
Panicky

Surprise

Caught off guard
Surprised
Stunned
Shocked

Helplessness (all are responses to evaluations and *lead to* feelings like fear or embarrassment)

Vulnerable
Unsafe
Inferior
Incompetent
Inept

Impatience

Antsy
Edgy
Impatient
Intolerant

Interest (not *really* an emotion; a state of being)

Bored
Uninterested
Curious
Interested
Eager
Engaged

Weariness (not *really* an emotion; a state of being)
Tired
Fatigued
Drained
Used up
Exhausted