

# DISCUSSION #1: APPRECIATION

## (USING 5 STEPS OF COMMUNICATION)

1. Ask if it's a good time to share something.
2. First communication...
3. Feelings...
4. When I was a child...
5. Hug

**Talker:** *I'd like to share something I appreciate about you. Would this be a good time?*

**Receiver:** Yes, it's a good time.

**Talker:** *One thing I appreciate about you is \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Receiver:** Let me see if I got that. One thing you appreciate about me is \_\_\_\_\_. Is there more about that?

**Talker:** *Yes. When you do that I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (or When I see that in you, I feel \_\_\_\_\_).*

**Receiver:** What you're saying is \_\_\_\_\_. Is there more about that?

**Talker:** *Yes. When I was a child (share something about this trait that was either present or absent in your childhood.)*

**Receiver:** Repeats back. Is there more about that?

If yes, continue. If not,

**Receiver:** "Thank you for sharing."

**Talker:** "Thank you for listening."

**Give each other a 1 minute full body hug. Just relax in each other's arms.**

*(These discussions are modified from "Relationships First" Safe Conversations 360)*

## DISCUSSION #2: SELF-DISCOVERY (USING 8 STEPS OF COMMUNICATION)

Instruction: look at the list of emotions/feelings and find one you can identify with right now.

1. Ask if it's a good time to share something.
2. First communication...
3. Feelings...
4. When I was a child...
5. When I feel this way, it helps if you \_\_\_\_\_
6. Validate
7. Empathize
8. Hug

*Talker: I'd like to share something I'm feeling right now. Would this be a good time?*

**Receiver:** Yes, it's a good time.

*Talker: One thing I'm feeling is \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Receiver:** Let me see if I got that. One thing you are feeling is \_\_\_\_\_. Is there more about that?

*Talker: Yes. I think that (these circumstances) \_\_\_\_\_ contribute to that feeling.*

**Receiver:** What you're saying is you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and you think that \_\_\_\_\_ is contributing to that. Is there more about that?

*Talker: Yes. When I was a child (share something about this feeling that was either present or absent in your childhood or a time you remember feeling this way.)*

**Receiver:** Repeats back. Is there more about that?

*Talker: Yes, when I feel this way it helps if you \_\_\_\_\_ .*

**Receiver:** Repeats back. Is there more about that?

If yes, continue. If not, **receiver now VALIDATES:**

That makes sense and is so helpful for me to know. When you feel \_\_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_\_ it takes you back to your childhood when you felt that way when \_\_\_\_\_. It also makes sense that you would bring that into our relationship.

**AND EMPATHIZES:**

And given that, I can imagine that if I respond to your feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ that you would feel \_\_\_\_\_ (glad, relieved, happy, connected, heard, supported, etc.) Is there more?

*If yes, continue in the same pattern of sharing/repeating. If not, finish with:*

**Receiver:** "Thank you for sharing."

*Talker: "Thank you for listening."*

**Give each other a 1 minute full body hug. Just relax in each other's arms.**

## DISCUSSION #3: COMFORT

**Instruction:** Think about a time in your childhood when you were sad, disappointed, heartbroken, or grieving. Share with your spouse about what happened, how you felt, and how your emotional pain was handled.

*Talker:* I'd like to share a memory right now. Would this be a good time?

**Receiver:** Yes, it's a good time.

*Talker:* When I was (age) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (event) happened. I remember feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

**Receiver:** Let me see if I got that (summarize what your spouse said) \_\_\_\_\_. Is there more about that?

*Talker:* Yes. When I think about whether I was comforted or not, here's what I remember:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Receiver:** What you're saying is (summarize what your spouse said) \_\_\_\_\_. Is there more about that?

*Talker:* Yes. When I was a child (share something about whether comfort was present or absent in your childhood in general. If it was present, who can you remember comforting you?)

**Receiver:** (Repeats back) Is there more about that?

If yes, continue in the same pattern. If not, receiver now VALIDATES:

**Receiver:** That's so helpful for me to know. When you are sad/disappointed/hurt or are grieving, I can better understand your default response because of your childhood. It also makes sense that you would bring that into our relationship.

**AND EMPATHIZES:**

And given that, I can imagine that if I respond to you by \_\_\_\_\_ that you would feel seen, heard and comforted. Is there more?

*If yes, continue in the same pattern of sharing/repeating. If not, finish with:*

**Receiver:** "Thank you for sharing."

*Talker:* "Thank you for listening."

**Give each other a 1 minute full body hug. Just relax in each other's arms.**

# SOUL WORDS

## *A Feelings Word List*

**HAPPY**, cheerful, delighted, elated, encouraged, glad, gratified, joyful, lighthearted, overjoyed, pleased, relieved, satisfied, thrilled, secure, optimistic

**LOVING**, affectionate, cozy, passionate, romantic, sexy, warm, tender, responsive, thankful, appreciative, refreshed, pleased, comforted, reassured

**HIGH ENERGY**, energetic, enthusiastic, excited, playful, rejuvenated, talkative, pumped, motivated, driven, determined, obsessed, jittery

**AMAZED**, stunned, surprised, shocked, jolted, enlightened

**ANXIOUS**, afraid, uneasy, nauseated, nervous, restless, preoccupied, worried, scared, tense, fearful, terrified, insecure, indecisive, hyper-vigilant, cautious

**CONFIDENT**, positive, secure, self-assured, assertive

**PEACEFUL**, relieved, at ease, calm, comforted, cool, relaxed, composed, protected

**OVERWHELMED**, apprehensive, boxed in, burdened, confused, distressed, guarded, hard-pressed, paralyzed, panicky, tense, weighted down, edgy

**TRAUMATIZED**, shocked, disturbed, injured, damaged, unloved, unlovable, hated

**ANGRY**, annoyed, controlled, manipulated, furious, grouchy, grumpy, irritated, provoked, frustrated, hateful, cold, icy, bitter, cynical

**LOW ENERGY**, beaten down, exhausted, tired, weak, listless, depressed, detached, withdrawn, indifferent, apathetic, lazy, bored

**ALONE**, avoidant, lonely, abandoned, deserted, isolated, cut off, detached, disconnected, unwanted

**SAD**, unhappy, crushed, dejected, depressed, desperate, hopeless, grieved, heavy, despairing, weepy

**BETRAYED**, deceived, fooled, duped, tricked, misled, skeptical

**CONFUSED**, baffled, perplexed, mystified, bewildered, misunderstood, disoriented

**ASHAMED**, guilty, mortified, humiliated, embarrassed, exposed, stupid

**DISAPPOINTED**, let down, disheartened, disillusioned, distrustful

**INVISIBLE**, forgotten, overlooked, unimportant, invisible, disregarded, lost

**DESPISED**, ridiculed, dumb, belittled, mocked, scorned, shamed, hated, detested