

Behavior Change Request Dialogue

For ultimate healing in relationships, it is best to aim for unconditional acceptance of your partner while focusing on our own opportunities for healing and communicating our needs. However, there are some behaviors that are unhealthy and detrimental to relationships and we can choose to change for our partner if we wish. The purpose of this exercise is to learn more about each other's deepest needs and give you the opportunity to change your behavior to meet those needs. As you stretch against your resistance to change, your partner will experience emotional healing and you will become a more whole, accepting, and loving person.

1) The first step is to identify the desires that lie behind your frustrations. Each person will make their own list of all the things that bothers you about your partner. What does your partner do that makes you feel angry, annoyed, afraid, frustrated, suspicious, resentful, hurt, or bitter?

I don't like it when you	When you do, I feel

- 2) On the next page, write down the global desire that lies hidden within each of your frustrations. You will be sharing this with your partner, so write only the desire, not the frustration.
- 3) Then write 1-3 specific requests you have on how your partner can help with this desire. Keep the request positive and specific. Your partner can't read your mind and know what you want if you don't communicate it. An unhelpful request would be "I want you to be more attentive" or "I want you to stop yelling at me when you are upset." A better example would be "For the next week I would like you to give me a warm hug when you come home for at least 30 seconds."

Global Desire	Specific Request	Importance	Difficulty
	(can be more than one per desire)	Rank	Rank
ex: I would like you to comfort me when I'm upset.	1) For the next month, when I tell you I'm upset, I would like you to put your arms around me and give me your full attention for 5 min. 2) This week, when I tell you I'm upset I would like you to look directly at me, listen carefully, and reflect back to me what I said.		

- 4) Rank each request from 1-5 with 1 being most important to you and 5 being least important.
- 5) Share your global desires and specific requests with your partner. You partner should reflect back what they heard until you both get clear about the request and desire.
- 6) After both people have shared their lists, ask your partner how difficult they feel it will be for them to meet your request. Rank each request from 1-5 with one being easiest to 5 being most difficult.
- 7) Identify the top 3-5 requests that will be easiest to work toward and most important to your partner. Make an agreement to work toward these requests to start. Over time, feel free to add in more of your partners requests and/or revisit this process to identify more behaviors you both wish to change.

Adapted from Getting the Love You Want by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D. (2008).