

A scenic landscape featuring a winding path that curves through a lush green field. The path is bordered by a simple wooden fence. The sky above is a clear blue with scattered, soft white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and open.

BEST LIFE

MAKING
THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
THE BEST OF YOUR LIFE

Love Smart Through Communication

PART 1: Learning To Listen Openly



LISTENING BLOCKS, DEFENSES, AND CLEAN COMMUNICATION AGENDA

- What Are The Listening Blocks
- What Are Defenses
- Three General Defensive Responses
- What Is Clean Communication
- 7 Steps To Changing Habits And Achieving A Greater Intimacy



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Avoid The Classroom Approach Of Overly Dissecting Or Just Memorizing
- Remember The Partnership Cardinal Question, “Is It More Important To Be Right Or Happy?”
- Illumination Is Only $\frac{1}{4}$ Of The Struggle, Application, Rejuvenation, And Witness Are The Other $\frac{3}{4}$
- Be Respective Of Each Other’s Growth & Style



The 11 Listening Blocks:

- Mind Reading
- Rehearsing
- Filtering
- Judging
- Daydreaming
- Advising
- Sparring
- Being Right
- Derailing
- Placating
- Catastrophizing



What Is Defensiveness In Relationships

DEFENSIVENESS is a posture we assume when we perceive a threat or experience pain. It is a way of putting up a wall of protection. Walls protect, but they also reinforce distance and boundaries.

Defensiveness achieves two things:

- Helps us cope with and/or avoid pain
- Undermines the fabric of a relationship due to its cost



Feeling That Can Evoke Defensiveness

- Rejection
- Loss
- Loneliness
- Emptiness
- Tired
- Fear
- Guilt
- Failure
- Hurt
- Humiliation
- Jealously
- Abandonment
- Numbness
- Engulfed
- Unworthy



Three Typical Defenses

- **Avoiding**: Escaping the situation altogether in advance or once it occurs
- **Denying**: Ignoring the obvious or convincing yourself that what is happening is something else
- **Acting**: Reacting in a way that is usually aggressive and protective



Avoiding

- **Turn Away**: Turn to something/someone else
- **Turn Off**: Use coldness or distance
- **Triangulating**: Add other people in an escapist, replacing, and/or surrogate manner
- **Addictions**: Becoming tied to a non-human
- **Compulsive Activity**: Becoming tied to a behavior like shopping, tv, or working
- **Give Up**: You just stop trying or check out



Denial

- **Showing Nothing**: Not letting people get to know you or know that they got to you
- **Compliance**: Please or placate the person
- **Competing**: Out perform your partner
- **Boasting**: Pointing verbally to what you did right/better
- **Distracting**: Change the scene/subject to avoid
- **Forgetting**: Let the memory slip into the back of your mind, if not “out” of your mind altogether



Acting Out

- **Attacking**: Lashing out in an outwardly confrontational manner verbally or physically
- **Passive Aggression**: Hurting your partner subtly
- **Fault Finding**: Criticizing, ridiculing, or blaming
- **Revenge**: A consciously planned hurtful action
- **Demanding**: Protect yourself by demanding for your partner to do something
- **Self-blame**: Pain, anger, or disappointment turned inward



Three Typical Defenses Discussion

AVOIDING

Turn Away

Turn Off

Triangulating

Addictions

Compulsive Activity

Give Up

DENIAL

Show Nothing

Compliance

Competing

Boasting

Distracting

Forgetting

ACTING OUT

Attacking

Passive Aggression

Fault Finding

Revenge

Demanding

Self-blaming



Identify Your Defenses

Defense

Pain

Cost

(What were you
trying to avoid)

(consequences in
your relationship)



7 Steps To Changing Habits & Achieving A Greater Intimacy

1. Vertical Repentance: acknowledge to God
2. Horizontal Repentance: acknowledge to your partner
3. Identify when, where, how you used it
4. Admit to yourself the pain that underlies the defense and that you are trying to avoid this pain
5. Acknowledge how this defense costs you, your relationship, and spiritual growth
6. Both you and your partner invite God in to help you move toward wholeness
7. Walk redemptively, having been transformed

