

Tired of being unappreciated?

When you negotiate in your relationship, it is important to come from a place of joy and choice. When you have the habit of acting from a place of sacrifice, there are often strings attached. *I want to feel loved or appreciated, so I'll do this so he/she will see how much I'm here. Or, I'll agree to this so then my partner will do something for me.* Then, when your partner doesn't read your mind and acknowledge your efforts in the way you were looking for, you get mad/resentful or sad and protect yourself with attack or withdrawal.

Over time, you may choose to do things either with anger or bullying behaviors, or on your own because you perceive that your partner is not willing to support you. This can all be quite subtle, but it wears away at the bond between you. Worse, your partner may have no idea of what's going on or how to support you, because this dialogue is inside of your mind. *But I've talked til I'm blue in the face,* you say. More often I see that partners defend themselves or use lengthy explanations of what went wrong, but stay on the surface. That sounds something like this: *I arranged for the kids to be on overnights, cleaned the house, stocked up on groceries, paid the bills, cooked dinner, and you couldn't even help me with dishes.* So your partner is thinking you are upset about dishes not being done. But from the other point of view, you were racing around taking care of things and he/she assumed that is what you wanted to do, so he/she hesitated to ask you to sit down and relax with him/her, even assuming you didn't want to spend time with him/her. You assumed that his/her lack of invitation is something about him/her not appreciating you or not wanting to spend time connecting with you.

When your emotional needs are met proactively, it is much easier to negotiate and compromise from a place of joy. This eliminates defending, rationalizing, explaining, justifying, demands, and other gamey behaviors. That would sound more like: *I'm excited about this Friday when we get to have a date night. I'm concerned that you expect me to have the house cleaned, grocery shopping and cooking done before we get to have time together. I think if I do all that, I'll miss out on the chance to spend time with you. I've missed snuggling and talking with you about what matters most to us. I crave time to talk about things other than our day to day chores. Would you be willing to help me grocery shop and pay bills early in the week so we can cook dinner together and eat by candlelight Friday?*

So often we don't ask because our assumptions are so locked in we think we don't have any choices. Really, these messages trick you to "protect" you from hearing no or feeling sad. But when you put walls up, not only could they be unnecessary, but regardless, they get in the way of intimacy and bonding. If you feel sad and share that with your partner, you have the opportunity to fully communicate and be seen and understood by your partner. If you only communicate the surface demands of wanting help accomplishing chores, without the heartfelt invitation to connect, you are less likely to get your emotional needs met. You need to build trust within yourself to handle uncomfortable emotions that may come up when you take risks.

I can help you learn how to address underlying needs and communicate more effectively help deepen your relationship with yourself and others.

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I help stressed out couples stop fighting and start communicating.

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