



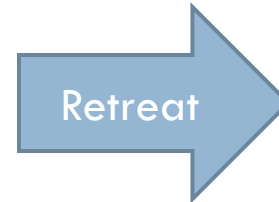
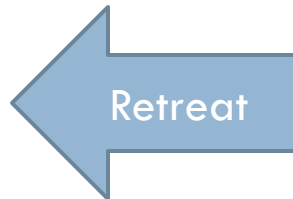
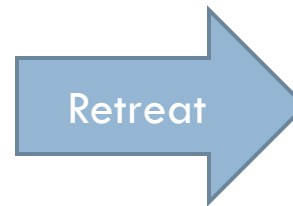
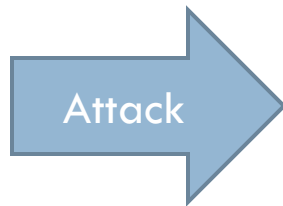
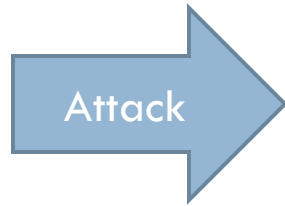
MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

WINNIG STRATEGIES-Gratitude, Making Requests

Jean Muir, with source material provided by Dr. Jennifer Finlayson-Fife

3 CONFLICT PATTERNS



LOSING STRATEGIES

- Controlling our partner
- Proving we are right
- Unbridled self-expression
- Revenge
- Withdrawal
- Costly accommodation



WINNING STRATEGIES

- Gratitude
- Making Requests
- Self Soothing
- Repair Attempts



Gratitude

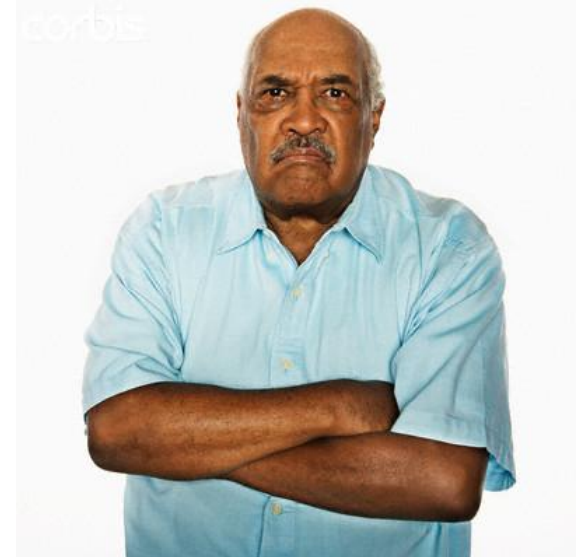
You always get more of what you appreciate in others.



Making Requests

**YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO
COMPLAIN ABOUT....**

**NOT GETTING WHAT YOU'VE
NEVER ASKED FOR.**



Why we don't ask for what we want



- Less vulnerable- Don't have to face disappointment
- Don't actually know what we want
- Don't have to figure out a solution
- Risk shaking up your relationship

What do we tend to do instead?

- Focus on the negative
 - on what we are not getting
- Take for granted what we are getting
- Feel entitled to being contented at all times (“Your job is to make me happy!”)



Why complaining is so common

- Masquerades as information
- Makes us feel less vulnerable, needy
- Does not require truth, specificity, responsibility, or authenticity
- Feels like a legitimate response to dissatisfaction



Maintain a Sense of Relational Esteem

Holding the relationship in high regard even in the face of imperfection, even in the face of not getting all that you want or hoped for.



The Paradox Of Intimacy

In order to have a healthy, passionate relationship you have to do the hard work of identifying **what it is that you want** and pursuing it, (even when spouse is resisting you).

This requires risk and the ability to endure discomfort.

What should we do?



Stay humble about what we receive

Manage our sense of entitlement

We are not entitled to love (unenforceable demand)

One Up (Pride)

Problematic Pursuer
Boundary-less / Control

"Get over here and love me!"

Outside-in self esteem
Entitlement - You owe me happiness
Manage relationship with:
Anger, rage, criticism, fear, aggression
Can become physically or emotionally abusive

One Up (Pride)

Problematic Distancer
Walled-Off / Control

"You're not worthy of me!"

Protected but not connected -defensive "I don't care"
Take safety through:
Indifference, passive aggression, snobbery, elitism, intimidation,
manipulation, presumptuousness, self promoting, criticism, autonomy
Affairs, addictions, pornography as less vulnerable forms of pseudo-
intimacy

Healthy Boundary and Esteem

Healthy Guilt-leading to improvement
Relational Esteem
Have right to want something and ask for it.
Forgiving without strings
Place of being-not of doing
Listening with generosity
Esteem comes from honesty, spirituality, unalterable self worth, God's love

One Down (Shame)

Problematic Pursuer
Boundary-less / Shame

"I'll do anything, just love me!"

Outside-in self esteem
Love dependent-fear of abandonment
Toxic shame-sense of worthlessness
guilt, devalue, need others' esteem, respect and love,
looking for affirmation, submission

One Down (Shame)

Problematic Distancer
Walled-Off / Shame

"My needs don't matter."

Sacrifice connection-love avoidant - fear of engulfment
Hold on to self through:
Taking needs out of the equation-have to be there for everyone else
disengagement, unwillingness to listen, unavailability, withdrawal,
depression, resignation, martyr

ENTITLEMENT:

- A “one-up” stance
- Protects us from the vulnerability of wanting and not getting
- Can soothe ourselves out of shame by focusing on the defectiveness of the other
- Externalizes the wanting; **decreases guilt**
- Makes spouse feel taken for granted, controlled, devalued.

Sincere GRATITUDE is antithetical to entitlement

- It pushes us to acknowledge the fallacy of the belief that “You're supposed to make me happy!”
- Most of us live in some level of resentment towards our spouse, not for egregious misdeeds, but because they didn't deliver on a promise that they never agreed to in the first place
- Sincere gratitude forces us to recognize what our spouse does for us as GIFTS, gifts to which we are not entitled, but that BLESS OUR LIVES
- Gratitude keeps us out of a “one up” stance
- Increases our chances of getting more of what enriches our lives

WINNING STRATEGY: SHIFT FROM COMPLAINT TO REQUEST

- **Determine what you really want and why** First step is to go after what you want
- Will get more of what you want out of your relationship if you begin to humbly but courageously ask for it
- We usually DO NOT ask for what we want. Instead, hope spouse will get it right, and when they don't-complain, or resent

Dealing with Conflict: Summary

- There are both losing and winning strategies for getting what we want in a relationship
- Gratitude is fundamental
- We must examine ourselves to determine what we really want and if that is a legitimate need
- Make legitimate requests with courage and firmness, but without accusation or threats