How To Disagree...
and Feel Great Together

"It must be peace *without* victory...only a peace between equals can last." —Woodrow Wilson

"Man's inability to communicate, is a result of his failure to listen effectively, skillfully, and with understanding to another person."
—Carl Rogers, psychologist

Reflecting on the painful end of her marriage, actress Halle Berry sighed, "Why can't all men be like dogs?" Her canines snoring by her side, she observed, "They are the only men in my life, because they give unconditional love...."

Here we explore the science and art of "mirroring" or reflective listening, which is a specific technique for methodically giving and receiving the unconditional love we all yearn for. We'll share the steps for reliably eliciting this much sought after state. Mirroring can be used in any situation between people when things are headed south. We'll see the way that mirroring offers us a practical approach for resolving arguments so everyone wins...allowing each to have their emotions, not be blamed for them, and actually arrive at increased closeness and love. Doesn't that sound good?

A wonderful way to introduce mirroring is through the analogy of a simple gesture: simply fold your own two hands together, allowing the fingers to interlace. We invite you to do this for a moment. Most likely you'll find this motion instinctive, the fingers sliding together to form a smooth fit.

Got it?

Now we'd like you to clasp them again, only this time the other way—whichever thumb was originally inside is now on the outside. Did the second version seem strange for a moment? ...Perhaps a bit awkward?

The second hand clasp represents what happens during your first several attempts at mirroring (especially when the person you are

attempting to mirror is angry at you!). Your mind recoils and thinks, "This can't work! Let me out of here!"
Similarly to the way the mind reacts to the new hand clasp, initial attempts at mirroring can seem just plain weird! You might think it sounds as if you're agreeing with the person, when you don't. Or, you may think, "This is going to turn into a blame session, and I'm the one who's going to be blamed!" Perhaps you're concerned about sounding artificial, or mocking. And, although effective mirroring possesses a neutral quality, flavored with love—how can anyone remain neutral and loving while being blamed?
We will address and solve these concerns. First, let's look at arguments.

Why Bother to Mirror? We <u>Like</u> to argue!!!

Sometimes couples are reluctant to learn mirroring skills, thinking they would prefer to keep arguing. After all, a good argument serves to "blow off steam," thus bringing the emotional level down (for at least one of them). And, underneath it all, "we know we really love each other."
Unfortunately, the very nature of an argument is that it requires a winner and a loser. This means that at least one of us walks away with emotional residue afterwards. Later, given that good ol' reliable need to be understood, the hurt gets "passed" back, through a snide remark or an unkind act. Mirroring affords us a release of tension where we both win, and halts the "passing" cycle.
Now, on to mirroring:
MIRRORING is a listening and communication mode consisting of:
1) Hearing the other person's thoughts and emotions.
2) Recreating and interpreting their experience inside yourself.
3) Speaking the interpretation as a question.
4) Checking for accuracy.
Mirroring assumes the speaker is sharing a completely valid and important experience, which generates from a positive intent. The purpose of mirroring is to provide the speaker with the experience of being fully and sincerely heard on their thoughts, feelings and positive intent.
Although mirroring is often comprised of statements, these statements end as questions. For example, on hearing a friend sadly describe her absentee father, you say, "You kind of missed out on having a Dad, huh?" The added words "huh?" or "didn't you?" invite the speaker to make corrections if need be. With skill, this

flavor of curious inquiry can be transmitted through a voice tone, rather than with, “huh?” or “didn’t you?” As long as the speaker knows you’re coming from an inquiry about his/her experience, rather than expressing your own opinions, mirroring works. For beginners, it can be extremely useful to simply repeat the person’s words back exactly and then ask whether you got it correctly. However, since repeating each word verbatim sounds rather mechanical, the eventual goal is to be able to sum up the gist of their statement, and rephrase it, using your own words.

Let’s explore these subtleties by delving into some *examples*:

Cal says, “It just drives me nuts when you borrow my things and don’t return them!” Maxine sounds a bit robotic to reply, “So, it just drives you nuts when I borrow your things and don’t return them, huh?” She would sound more real and warm if she were to speak her understanding of Cal’s statement in her own words, such as, “Gosh, it must be frustrating to discover one of your things is missing from where you know you left it. Tell me more.” This warm style encourages him to say more.

Cal continues, “I don’t know what to say! I’m stumped! You just do whatever the heck you please with my stuff, forgetting that I might need those tools today! Why do you *do* this?”

As Cal’s anger mounts, Maxine’s main objective is to put her instinctive tendency to react on the shelf. This will be tough, because his voice tone may sound threatening and insulting. However, after repeated experiences it gets easier—she’ll remember how great the results were the last time she stuck with mirroring all the way until his anger completed and he returned to a state of peace. The general idea is to support Cal in simply being heard. To do this she’ll mirror both his thoughts and his feelings. Lastly, she’ll mirror his positive intent, providing a powerful completion to the process.

Back to their interchange:

Maxine mirrors: “So, you’re just dumbfounded as to what to say. It seems unbelievable that I wouldn’t realize how important your tools are to you, huh? After all, they are your tools, and you’re a contractor. You can’t work without your tools, and people are depending on you (his positive intent).” She adds, “Did I get it so far?”

When she said “and people are depending on you” Maxine was taking a guess as to the positive intent behind Cal’s anger. Even if she didn’t get the right one he will instantly sense he’s being validated. Maxine also took a chance by adding the part about his being a contractor. Although she knew he was a contractor, it wasn’t

something he had just said. Mirroring is rather like taking a shot in the dark, and then checking to see if you got it correctly. There's a fine line between reinterpreting what was said, and adding something that simply wasn't their viewpoint. However, as long as your voice tone is one of curiosity (rather than condescending or demanding) the partner usually senses your intent to honor his or her viewpoint. Then, if you didn't hit the mark, he or she will simply correct you.

You may have also noticed that Maxine resisted the urge to answer his question. Again, the objective is to avoid giving solutions, apologies or answers—until the emotional level is down. By observing angry exchanges between yourself and others you may begin to notice that the moment you answer an angry or demanding question, your body experiences a rush of energy, as though suddenly bombarded with the impact of the other person's emotion. Now we're not saying it's easy to mirror and remain neutral when your partner has a high level of anger. However, answering "loaded" questions, practically *guarantees* you'll be unable to mirror, and end up in emotional pain!

Common Pitfalls

A major pitfall that can be tricky for beginners is when the person doing the mirroring "leads" the other, without realizing it. Without a coach, "leading" can be difficult to recognize. For example, John is mirroring Christi:

Christi: "I got home last night and the sink was piled high with dishes.... I was furious when I saw you just sitting there, watching T.V. with the kids!"

John mirrors: "So, you came home and saw the sink full of dishes, and you were furious when you saw me watching T.V. with the kids, after I'd just spent all day being Daddy, and was exhausted. Is that right?"

As you can sense, John's mirroring was not quite free of his own viewpoints. His addition of "I'd just spent all day being Daddy and was exhausted," was spoken in his own behalf, and probably with some emotional defensiveness in it—his own viewpoint. The result of John's adding his own views is that Christi will sense she isn't being heard on *her* viewpoint. This causes the mirroring process to take longer, and it will seem exhausting to both of them. Being a beginner, John hasn't yet experienced holding off from adding any of his own viewpoints all the way through the positive intent stage. Once he has

stayed with mirroring Christi all the way through to getting her positive intent, he'll have full-bodied knowledge of what awaits: a grateful, happy-to-hear-him, partner. Quickly he will gain power and ease with the technique of temporarily putting his own opinions on the shelf.

When the person who is in the mirroring position adds personal viewpoints without first warning their partner, mirroring sessions become painful. "We tried it! Mirroring doesn't work!" become typical complaints.

The general premise here could be summed up as:

One person "hooked" at a time.

That is, partners take turns expressing emotionally laden viewpoints. But what if John is simply too full of his own response to stay neutral and mirror? His heart has sped up, his emotions are rising...those kids ran him ragged all day! No way could he have gotten to the dishes! How dare she blame him!

Who gives?

This addresses another crucial guideline, often dropped out by beginners:

Always let your partner know before adding ANY of your own reactions or opinions.

Have you ever been speaking your viewpoint to someone who seemed to be listening, when suddenly he or she jumped in with angry reactions to your words? If so, can you recall feeling shock for a moment? When we sense we are being heard, our bodies tend to become open—far more open than when we are the ones doing the listening. As we speak we seem to search our internal data banks, allowing our thoughts to flow. And, if we feel strongly about what we're sharing, this adds to our vulnerability.

To alert Christi to prepare to listen, John could say, "May I offer you my thoughts?" Or he could say, "Wow! My emotional level just shot up! Can we switch, and you mirror me for awhile?" If, after having said this, they're both just too emotional to be able to mirror, one of them could say:

"My intent is to be able to hear you right now, but I'm too emotional to be able to stay neutral. So how about we wait until one of us is able to mirror from a more neutral place?"

Safety builds rapidly between partners when the guideline of one person 'hooked' at a time is followed. Magically, when this guideline is strictly adhered to, their staying power increases dramatically and quickly. In other words, they're able to remain in the mirroring mode longer before needing to switch.

Why, in the beginning of learning to mirror, is it so difficult to recognize when our own emotions are invading? Perhaps the answer is that we're making a sincere effort, and we simply don't want to admit our personal "stuff" is sliding in. But when our own emotions encroach, words or phrases that were not *the speaker's* viewpoint begin to appear in our mirroring. Our voice tone may take on a demanding edge, losing the quality of curiosity. As mentioned a minute ago, we may attempt to "lead" them into saying what we want them to say. Perhaps we become the teacher or wise one, sounding condescending, all under the guise of mirroring. Or, unaware of our own fear, we may rush the speaker, almost overeager to mirror him or her. These are all common pitfalls. Like any skill, mirroring requires polishing.

After these pitfalls have been noticed and eliminated, communication, trust and closeness begin to soar in ways we never dreamed possible!

The Components of Communication

How do we extract the essence of someone's expression so we can put it in our own words? One way is to break the communication down into several parts. As we talk back and forth with various people all day, we rarely notice the individual components which comprise the statements they speak. If we were to analyze a communication, we would usually find these elements:

The description of an event (for example, you were in the grocery store. Two men ahead of you on line began raising their voices to each other. "I'm telling you, back off, or you're going to be sorry!" one of them said to the other).

Your thoughts about the event (You thought they were going to burst into a fist fight, and you might get accidentally injured).

What you felt about the event (You felt fear).

What you did, or wanted to do (You took your cart and began to back out of line).

Your positive intent (To protect yourself).

The following analogy may assist your grasp of these elements: Experienced cooks often learn at least one favorite dish which eventually becomes their "stand-by." Although the dish may require certain irreplaceable items (such as onions for French onion soup), over time other ingredients and exact amounts become flexible. Eventually they add by pinches—if they go a bit overboard the

balance can be instinctively restored by an added pinch of something else.

Like the experienced cook, after a while we won't necessarily need to address all the above listed components of communication during a given mirroring interchange. For example, Elaine is griping about how she can't get through on the phone to an important client. We might simply say, "Wow, that must be frustrating!" (mirroring her emotional state). That may be all that's needed for her to sense she's been heard. Or, "So, you spent all day leaving messages, and the guy never returned your calls?" (mirroring what happened) or "It must be frustrating when people break their agreements and don't make amends, because you consider the keeping of one's word really important." (Notice how this mirrors her emotion, what happened and her positive intent).

Learning to separate and mirror the individual components of a communication is unparalleled for producing warm, bonding exchanges (see Exercises at the end of this essay).

So the best way to learn how to mirror is to just jump in and expect to flub up! If you get out there and fumble around, eventually you'll begin to sense intuitively what works best to support a person in being heard. Make your tone warm and concerned, yet easygoing. Occasionally you might try raising your voice as they do (for instance, when your buddy slams the phone down, having been cut off after being put on hold for ten minutes, and yells "Damn! I wanna SHOOT someone!!!" you call out from across the room in a voice just as loud "Oh MAN, doesn't that drive you *crazy* to be cut off like that!?")

What Works Best?

Ever notice how a certain kind of response tends to put you at ease when you're expressing something important and struggling to formulate your words? Each of us appreciates being heard in specific ways. Some folks love hearing their words repeated back, verbatim. Others find they arrive at spontaneous insights and breakthroughs when their partner simply listens long enough, occasionally nodding or saying "tell me more."

Suffice it to say, although a level 4 communication may require a mere, "Sounds like you had a long day!" a level five or higher tends to require we mirror more of the individual components of their expression. After trying different approaches we suggest you ask your partner what worked best for him or her.

In a step-by-step learning process undertaken by willing partners, the next goal after repeating each other's words verbatim is to take turns mirroring each other about what happened, and the basic ideas and thoughts about what happened. For instance, Kent shares this story with Sue:

"I remember when I was five, my Dad took me fishing. I guess there wasn't anything particularly outstanding about the trip, but for some reason I still think of it occasionally. There was this moment when we were out on the lake, and dawn was just breaking. Usually things were so crazy at home...but we were out there, and it was just the two of us, totally still so as not to scare the fish. I was soaking it all in. I don't know, there was just incredible peace in that moment."

If Sue were to mirror Kent's basic description of the event, what happened, and the essence of his ideas about it, and then put it in her own words, she might say, "So you were out on the lake, the dawn was breaking. It was incredibly peaceful, as compared to the way things were at home. You're not certain why you remember this scene from time to time. It was kind of a "touchstone" moment in your life, huh?" Since this is an exercise, she inquires, "Did I get what happened correctly, and your basic thoughts about it?"

Next, she'll mirror the component of what he felt (Note that in this case he never actually said what he felt, so she'll take a shot in the dark and then check for accuracy). Again her goal is to be warm rather than mechanical, caring, yet not overbearingly so. "That must've been a precious experience for you, as a little boy. In that moment you felt a lot of love for your Dad, huh?"

If her guess about his emotion was an inaccurate mirror of his viewpoint, Kent will simply let her know, and she can try again (For instance the peace he mentioned might have been about the beauty of the moment, or the beauty of nature, rather than his love for his father).

Next, she can practice mirroring any actions included in his statement. His story didn't include much action (as in "I slammed on the brakes"), however he did say "I was soaking it all in," so she could mirror that part.

The positive intent is usually the crowning jewel of mirroring. Hearing it reflected back, the speaker often experiences being profoundly known. And, as also mentioned earlier, it's not always easy to discern the positive intent! Rarely does the speaker actually *say* his or her positive intent; most of us tend to be unconscious of the loving intent behind our actions and words. Kent wants someone to really understand what he felt in those moments. Hearing his

positive intent reflected back to him will help him know she understands. Kent's positive intent behind revisiting the story of the time on the lake may have been to experience closeness with his Dad. His positive intent for sharing the incident might be to re-experience and be heard about one of the rare moments of peace and joy in his childhood.

No doubt stories about happy fishing trips are a cinch, compared to finding the positive intent when the person is angry and directing it toward you! We assure you there is always a positive intent!

After practicing with less heated topics, some of the "awkwardness" of mirroring begins to wear off. The first few attempts usually seem the most difficult, stilted and artificial. We suggest that if your intent is to develop mirroring skills to the point where you can maneuver during high level emotions, first do all the exercises at the end of this essay. Then, if you have a partner, implement the basics we just outlined (mirroring each component). Then go get all the practice you possibly can! Obviously there's no restriction on where to obtain practice—everyone loves to be heard! Parties, workplaces and stores are all fertile ground! Because mirroring is made up of the elements that are present when a good friend is listening sincerely, it is quite possible to mirror so smoothly that no one knows your are practicing a technique.

As mirroring becomes familiar to you, it begins popping out of the hat in your day-to-day life. The next two examples demonstrate daily life interactions. The first version illustrates a typical, non-mirroring style:

Arthur: "Mandy, it stinks to high heaven in here? What's going on?"
Mandy: "Oh, I painted the living room today. Have you seen it?"
Arthur: "Seen it? Who needs to see it? I can smell it!! It's disgusting!!!"
Mandy: "Well, just go open some windows!" (Note: Is Arthur being heard?)
Arthur: "You could've at least done it on a warm day or something—it's too cold to open the damn windows!"
Mandy: "God, Arthur, you are so picky sometimes!! Just open a window!! It's not the end of the world!"
Arthur: "Forget it. I'm going upstairs."
Mandy: "Okay, fine, just go upstairs. And while you're at it, don't bother coming down for dinner tonight. I'd prefer to eat alone."
Arthur: "Fine with me!"

Here's how the scene might look if they were using mirroring:

Arthur: "Mandy, it stinks to high heaven in here? What's going on?"
Mandy: "You're noticing the smell around here, huh?"
Arthur: "You bet I am! It's disgusting!!"
Mandy: "Smell's pretty strong, huh? It must be a little shocking to come home after a long day, to discover your house smells like a toxic garbage dump, huh!"
Arthur: (sighs a little) "Whew! You're not kidding! What a day! Our biggest clients hit the roof, over something they thought was my fault, which I knew nothing about. It all worked out, but it was touch and go for awhile."
Mandy: "Sounds like things got really tense. Quite a day! You're probably glad to be home to unwind a little, huh?"
Arthur: (sighs) "...very glad to be home (cheerfully). Say, watcha doin'? paintin' something?"
Mandy: "Yes! Wait'll you see it! I wanted to surprise you!"
Arthur: "You're really excited about how it came out, huh?"
Mandy: (a bit nervously) "...and I really hope you like it as much as I do."
Arthur: "...and you're a little nervous, 'cause you're not sure I'll like it, huh?"
Mandy: (lovingly) "Yes, thanks for hearing that. Are you ready to go see it?"
Arthur: "Sure. How about we pop some windows open on the way?"
Mandy: "Yeah, I guess I didn't realize how strong it got!"
Arthur: "You got so involved, you didn't notice it, huh?"
Mandy: "Yeah, this stuff can really make you dizzy!"

And another example of how <u>not</u> to do it:

Jack: "Sorry I'm late honey, I got held up at the office."
Laney: "So, what's new, you've always got some excuse!"
Jack: "Honey, that's not fair, I had to work late, I'm working hard so we can enjoy life."
Laney: "Enjoy?! I don't ever see you *enjoy* anything!!" (Note: Is Jack being heard here?)
Jack: "You could at least be supportive, it's not easy for me you know!"
Laney: "Oh, and I suppose you think I don't do anything to support you? I clean the house, I take care of the kids, I feed you! You don't

give a damn about my workload!!!" (Note: Is anybody actually wrong here?)
Jack: "Forget it! I'm going for a walk. I refuse to continue this ridiculous argument with you!"
Laney: "Okay, fine, just go"

Here's how that scene might look if they were mirroring:

Jack: "Sorry I'm late honey, I got held up at the office."
Laney: "So you had an extra long day, huh?"
Jack: "Yeah, I had to handle a last minute client and I felt bad about it, but I felt I should just stick with it anyway."
Laney: "So even though it was uncomfortable and not what you would have preferred, you thought it appropriate to stay a little longer?"
Jack: "Yeah, I'm glad you understand, I was afraid you'd be mad."
Laney: "Wow, so that must have been an extra burden on your mind while you were trying to handle that client?"
Jack: "Well, I guess actually it was because I never want to disappoint you."
Laney: "You work really hard for us, and you also know that I look forward to your return home at night, right?"
Jack: "You got that right!"
Laney: "Do you feel better now?"
Jack: "Gee I really do. Thanks!!
Laney: "Could you possibly listen to some feelings I have now?"
Perhaps you can see that in each of the second versions, although the couple was using a technique, it was the frameworks they were thinking from that produced the "win," in which each of them ended up being heard. These frameworks included:

- People yearn to be Heard, Received and Understood.
- One person "hooked" at a time (the other one mirrors).
- The person with the highest emotional level is mirrored first
- It's Either Peace or It's Discharge.
- All Viewpoints are Valid.
- Behind all words and actions are Positive Intents.

There are countless ways to utilize mirroring. Can you see how mirroring is the perfect delivery tool for all the principles in this book?

As stated earlier, when we validate another person's viewpoint even if we disagree with it, we support a natural completion to occur, facilitating emotional shifts to occur.

Author Studs Terkel once saw a woman with several children, gazing and talking at an empty store window. He inquired about what she was doing. "Oh, I'm just looking at dreams," she replied wistfully. He then switched on his cassette recorder and taped her speaking. Eight or ten minutes later, one of the kids asked to hear what their Mom had said. Studs played it back and the woman was amazed. "Well," she uttered, "until I heard that, I never knew I felt that way!"

Countless times women have spoken to us of the deep yearning they feel for their men to simply listen, particularly to their emotional state. "Sometimes," one woman said, "around the time of my period, I just want to be heard so badly. Instead, he jumps in with solutions! If I complain of a sore back, he says, 'Well, when are you going to start exercising?' or goes to get me an aspirin. I know he cares, but if only he'd say, lovingly, 'So, you're feeling frustrated and sad, and your muscles are aching. That must be rough...tell me more, honey.' I think I'd just melt to hear those words! All that tension balled up inside me would release, if he would just *hear* me!"

It can be incredibly challenging for a man, at times, to simply mirror a woman tenderly, when she is in emotional distress. The urge to handle the problem may drive him to do everything but mirror.

On a similar note, we hear men complain that women often don't comprehend a man's need to gripe, grumble, and get things off his chest, particularly after a stressful day. If he's heard, the griping often disappears in a matter of minutes. Rather than processing or interaction, he just wants a sounding board, then he's ready to move on.

How surprised would you be to find yourself learning things you never knew out of inquiring of your mate, "What works best for you, when you're in (a particular) emotional state? Do you like me to mirror you, or say, 'tell me more?' or just listen?"

A Few Reasons Your Mind May Offer You As To Why You <u>Shouldn't</u> Mirror:

- I'm not giving in to him (her) —I am right.
- I'm afraid to have him think I'm agreeing with him (her).
- There's too much to learn. I'll never be able to do it.
- If I open up the floodgates, my (or our) emotions will swallow me up. I won't be able to function or get anything done in my life.

• I don't know what I'm doing, and I'm going to look really stupid trying to do this mirroring stuff. I'm going to make a fool of myself!
• I'll never be as good as the writers of this book (or somebody else I know who would probably be great at mirroring), so why bother?

In answer to all these dilemmas, we lovingly remind you once again that all these concerns will fade away. Confidence builds powerfully when, having just mirrored your loved one, you see the look of awe and gratitude shining in his or her eyes. Practice is the key. Opportunities are everywhere.

Old Chinese saying, "If you don't change from the path you're on, you will probably end up where it's headed."

Summary and Helpful Hints

Mirroring assumes the speaker is sharing a completely valid and important experience. It provides the speaker with the experience of being fully heard on his / her thoughts, feelings and positive intent.

Although mirroring is often comprised of statements, these statements end as questions. With skill, the flavor of curious inquiry can be transmitted through a voice tone, rather than always adding, "huh?" or "didn't you?"

As long as the speaker knows you're coming from an inquiry about their experience, rather than expressing your own opinions, mirroring works.

When the person who is in the mirroring position adds his or her own personal viewpoints without first warning the partner, mirroring sessions become painful. Put your own thoughts, opinions, reactions aside!!! (Remember they will not hear you, if they are full of their own thoughts and emotions).

Always let your partner know before expressing your own thoughts, reactions or opinions. Ask: "May I offer you my thoughts?" or "Can we switch?"

One person "hooked" at a time is the general premise. Partners, please take turns expressing emotion laden viewpoints.

After trying different approaches, ask your partner what worked best for him / her.

A communication usually contains these components: what happened, what they thought and felt about what happened, their positive intent.

Exercises

The following exercises are designed for two people, to give you a little practice before attempting to mirror each other on emotionally driven topics. However, one person can get valuable practice by writing or speaking the answers out loud.
For partners, we suggest setting a time limit for sessions, followed by some reward (such as doing something both agree is fun, like taking a walk or watching a video).

1. Elizabeth is mirroring Dan. Read and circle:
—where Elizabeth is mirroring what she thinks Dan is feeling.
—where she is seeking to mirror his positive intent.
—where Elizabeth is "leading" Dan (putting in her own viewpoints).

Dan: "Elizabeth, I could really use some mirroring about something that's bothering me. Is now a good time?"
Elizabeth: "Sure."
Dan: "O.K. Well, I guess what I really want to say is that I know you're looking forward to it, but I just don't want to make the trip on Saturday."
Elizabeth: "So, you're not wanting to go...and you're concerned because you know I've been looking forward to it. Can you tell me more?"
Dan: "Well, your Dad isn't exactly the nicest person in the world, you know. He always, well, he snubs me. You know, like I'm the "bad seed" or something. And God forbid I should know something he doesn't! He's always got to be right!"
Elizabeth: "So, it's really uncomfortable being around my Dad. Your experience is that he looks down at you like he's Mr. Right and you're nobody. That must be really restrictive and frustrating, like walking on eggshells. You're caught between wanting to support me to have time with my folks, and taking care of yourself. Is that it?"
Dan: "Yes! Gosh it feels good to be mirrored! The other thing is...well, your mother's drinking problem really bothers me. She drags on and on with those late night stories, and I feel like if I say good night she'll be secretly mad at me or something."
Elizabeth: "So, when my Mom tries to get close to you because she's lonely, and has so few opportunities to talk to a friend, it kind of scares you, huh?"

Answers:

Where Elizabeth is mirroring what she thinks Dan is feeling:
"That must be really restrictive and frustrating, like walking on eggshells...."
Where she is seeking to mirror his positive intent:
"You're concerned because you know I've been looking forward to it," and:

"You're caught between wanting to support me to have time with my folks, and taking care of yourself."
Where Elizabeth is "leading" Dan (putting in her own viewpoints):
"So, when my Mom tries to get close to you because she's lonely, and has so few opportunities to talk to a friend, it kind of scares you, huh?"

2. The following words are spoken by people who are very upset. Use your imagination to make up three or more "reactive" replies for each phrase (a-d below). In other words, your replies can be just about anything *but* mirroring. Speak or write your answers. Make each response about one or two sentences. Your responses can include: trying to make them feel better, apologizing, offering solutions, defending yourself, etc., anything *other* than mirroring their experience back to them, listening, or saying "tell me more."

Example:

"I can't *believe* you went out again and left the door unlocked! You *always* do this! Why do you insist on putting our house and our valuables in jeopardy?!!"

A Few Non-mirroring Replies:

—"Oh, gosh, I'm sorry! I'll be more mindful from now on!"
—"That darn lock is so sticky! I'll have a look at it tomorrow!"
—"What are you so worried about? How many times have I told you, this neighborhood is totally safe!"

Now It's Your Turn:

a. "The whole trip you never offered to drive once! I guess I'm just the servant around here, huh?"
b. "All I asked was for the dry cleaning to be picked up on time, so we could pack tonight for the trip. Was that too much to ask? Guess I just shouldn't depend on you to keep your word, huh?"
c. "How can you be so *insensitive*? Last year I sacrificed a promotion so we could move closer to your damn university! Now, I want to have a baby, but *you* couldn't care less what *I* want!!"
d. "But I'm your mother, and you never take the time to come see me anymore!

3. Now go back to a, b, c and d above. Mirror each one. Include mirroring their *emotion* and their *positive intent.* Conclude with: "Did I get it correctly?"
For instance, for the first example you might say: "So...I left the door unlocked again. You must be feeling shocked and angry, huh? And

you're confused as to why I do this over and over. You just don't know how to get through to me about this! And it must be horrible for you, since your desire is for our house and family to be safe. You need to know you can depend on me. Did I get it correctly?"

Answers: We'll leave the mirroring up to your own creativity. Here some possible Positive Intents for a-d:

a. "You consider me a friend, and like to count on me that way." Also: "You're trying to take care of your body--you really need some rest, don't you ?

b. "You depend on me to keep my word. The integrity of keeping one's word is important to you, isn't it?" Also, "You like us to be organized and efficient, so things can go smoothly."

c. "You're trying to fulfill an important need," and, "You want to be acknowledged," and, "You'd like some appreciation and respect." Also, "Having waited patiently, now it's your turn, huh?" and perhaps, "You'd love for me to share the excitement of having a child with you."

d. "You love me and miss us spending time together," and perhaps, "You've given a lot to me, and you'd like some appreciation and respect."

Great work! If you've gotten this far you are demonstrating a sincere commitment to having your relationships be more fulfilling and to having more certainty and power in all your communications! Perhaps you are with a partner and are excited about the prospect of mirroring one another.

PLEASE CONSIDER THAN ANY TOOL, WHETHER IT BE A HAMMER OR ONE OF THE ABOVE, WILL HAVE NO EFFECT AT ALL UNLESS APPLIED AND RE APPLIED BY YOU. YOU HAVE THE POWER.

For training, sessions, books and personal contact, please call: Fred J. Keyser @ 858 450 0189. Thank you kindly for your attention.

Additional Reports available:

- Passing the Experience $12.00
- Mirroring-The Magical, Simple Skill $12.00