

The Most Important Thing To Know When Your Partner is Irrational or Emotional

©2003 Fred J. Keyser

“Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens.” —Jimi Hendrix

Can you recall a time when a conversation you were having with someone important to you took an unexpected left turn, and ended up on Argument Lane? If so, you probably felt surprised, disappointed and confused. One of the more subtle and difficult crossroads to recognize during a conversation is that sticky moment when an emotional shift has taken place—after which the conversation just feels “weird.” Somebody’s button got pushed, and things are getting adversarial! This essay will take a deeper look into those times when, although it looks like a conversation, it isn’t. We will also propose a way to view “negative” emotions that allows you to work with them, create a genuine clearing, and get back to peace. Let’s begin. Here’s a principle that’s utterly simple, yet completely shifts our lives when we use it as a “place to think from.” It releases us from the tension of not knowing how to act around high level emotions (ours or someone else’s). When we’re not at peace, where are we? This principle offers the perspective that in those moments what is present is discharge—in other words, stored emotions being released. These emotions went into storage at a time when we had no safety to feel or process them. Or perhaps we began to feel the emotions, but could not complete the experience, because as children we may have needed an adult who could guide and support us as to what was appropriate or acceptable regarding feelings. Perhaps we saw examples of emotions being repressed or redirected, or emotional expressions being punished. Any number of childhood experiences could lead to one being unable to complete (resolve) emotional states.

Let’s define the words:

“**Our natural state is peace**” means that our inborn, intrinsic response to the things happening around us is peace. This “peace” might consist of a joyful state, or simply being “okay” with the way things are.

“**Discharge**” refers to the release of physical, emotional or mental energy. Just like the physical body takes in food and then discharges unneeded, unused material so as to not clog the physical pipes, the mental and emotional bodies take in experience then release unneeded thoughts, pictures and emotions from storage. We call this discharge.

When we take on the perspective that all emotions other than peace are coming up so they can be discharged, an amazing thing happens: these negative emotions actually do discharge! This means that chunk by chunk, these emotions complete—they no longer jump out at unseemly moments. We find ourselves

more and more calm during incidents where previously we might have been terrified, deeply ashamed, angry or sad.

How Could You Do This To Me?

For a moment, we invite you to imagine you are a little child whose heart is set on receiving a particular birthday gift. The day finally arrives, but no gift! No one fully comprehends the weight of your broken heart. They attempt to change your mind, or distract you from your pain.

Years pass. Your husband or wife has promised to arrange a romantic outing at the theater on a particular evening. All week you're anticipating the performance. Alas, the day comes and the tickets were never purchased. You're distraught, livid and betrayed! "How could you do this to me?"

We suggest that without the emotionally incomplete incident from childhood, the present event might have triggered some disappointment, but not the same depth of anger and sadness. Sparked by the overlooked theater tickets, stored emotions are coming out.

Now, you have little choice about these emotions being in storage; little choice as to their appearance in the moment—however, you do have some degree of choice as to how you will relate to them in the moment. Will you feel them, or quickly rationalize them away? Will you react out of anger? Get a divorce? What will the strategy be?

Given this process is for the most part unconscious, perhaps you won't find yourself plopping down on the couch, uttering, "Hold me dear, while I feel the anger and sadness I experienced and didn't complete, when Dad broke his promise when I was six years old and didn't get me the puppy he'd promised me...."

Please understand that until childhood experiences become conscious and felt, the most likely way they will look for completion is by being triggered in an intimate relationship. Remember, our intimate relationships are the safest places, even though at times we may not consciously believe them to be safe.

Unfelt emotions get stored, color all other experiences, and can and do manifest physically if held inside for long enough. To support their completion, take a moment to increase them—and view them as discharge!

Those awful thoughts about "what so-and-so did to me" can be used like a little pump handle to facilitate the release of stored emotions. For example, say I suspect the anger presently flooding my body is not caused solely by you forgetting to buy theater tickets. Perhaps I surmise that something is coming out of storage. Now what? In order to facilitate the discharge process, I grab hold of your image or the mood or tone of you telling me you forgot to buy the tickets. I replay it and let the anger inside me increase, while knowing this is perhaps being fueled by something from my past seeking to discharge. For moments I'm engulfed by waves of feeling. Maybe I see glimpses...childhood memories.

Perhaps I experience an insight or two ("Wow!! What I've been feeling about the theater tickets is almost exactly the way I felt toward Dad!"). I encourage the pictures and feelings, opening my body toward them. Usually the most challenging of these emotions is shame—it burns and sears as it passes through (shame is often just beneath the surface of anger). How do I know if I've allowed sufficient discharge to pass through my body? I'll experience some sort of relief

from the “problem” or symptoms. Perhaps I will simply no longer see the situation as a problem, or the problem itself will totally disappear.

Thank God! There It Goes!

Once, a woman attending one of our study groups exclaimed, “Are you kidding? I’ve been discharging grief about my father’s death for six years now, and the pain hasn’t diminished one iota!” On deeper examination we discovered that the grief continually welling up in her body had been seen by her mind through a perspective which could be described as, “Oh no!! Not that again!!!” (having grief while trying not to)

The moment she shifted her perspective about the grief to, “Thank God!! There it goes!!!” a dramatic change occurred in the very quality of her crying. Whereas before her cries featured a sound of being sucked in and stifled (cries punctuated by gasps), they suddenly became powerful and clear. We stood by, offering her the framework that this was absolutely discharge, and that at her highest level of being she knew exactly what she was doing—attempting to complete these emotions, for years now, and that it was finally safe to do so.”

Within a short period of time she reported tremendous relief and a ball of tension having disappeared from her chest. Relaxed, open and refreshed, she began reaching out for affection from her husband whom she’d been keeping at a distance.

The Shame Game

Ever noticed how *we tend to attract those people who reflect the same qualities that are within us, yet are often hidden from our view?* Until the quality that is being reflected to us by them is identified as also being our own, the other person will continue to “drive us crazy” by demonstrating it. For instance, a woman who attracts a man who won’t make a commitment, may need to look deeply at her *own* fear of making a commitment. And, were she to look even deeper inside herself, she might discover a pocket of immense shame, and a belief that “If anyone really got to know me, he’d find out how useless (unlovable, ugly) I am!” We’ve noticed that people rarely make contact with one of these deeper shame pockets. More often they find themselves in a *strategy* phase (more about strategy in later essays), “acting out” an automatic response which protects them from actually feeling the shame. For instance, in the case we just mentioned, after her boyfriend tells her he’s not sure he wants to make a commitment, she flies into an automatic strategy of putting on a sexy dress and driving off to the nearest nightclub, thus “assuring” herself she’s still attractive enough to pick up a man. In this way she avoids feeling the shame and thinking, “I’m not attractive.” That, of course, was only one example of the knee-jerk mechanism for avoiding shame. There are many more. The point is not what strategy is in action, but whether or not the strategy is being subconsciously propelled by shame and fear. The down side of remaining in strategy, is that the shame and fear is never acknowledged and allowed to fully discharge. It therefore continues to draw us together with people who do those precise things that “make” us feel those emotions!

The good news is that if you suspect you have been resisting a pocket of shame, nothing more is necessary than simply relaxing and allowing it to pass through

your body like a wave. This, however, is easier said than done, so strong is the tendency to fly into action *before you are even aware of the shame!* It is surprising how often we've heard people say that they "simply don't ever feel any shame," and therefore don't have any. Perhaps they don't. If that is the case, their friends and family members won't feel shame around them. We will be looking at this more in later essays, for now, suffice it to say that if people around you report that they often feel shame when in your presence, odds are good you have some shame coming out of storage. It's no big deal, it seems to be par for the course of being born on this planet! Passing shame to the people we love can be handled easily, the most important step is the willingness on your part to investigate it. A few indicators that you may be being subconsciously "driven" by shame:

—blaming someone else.

—blaming oneself.

—a nagging discomfort or tension, that makes you talk speedily, or loudly, or interrupt others.

—a tendency to interrupt others by telling jokes, talking loudly or being silly.

—an unusual, almost overwhelming urge to clean your body, another person's body, or the house.

—when asked, your family members and friends report they often feel shame when in your presence. **What you can do:** ask them to describe specific incidents in which they perceived you as blaming them, or treating them as if they were not good enough, or as if you were ashamed of them. As they tell you about these incidents, do not interrupt to offer them strategies, apologies or solutions. Instead, mirror them lovingly, mostly just listening quietly, *until you sense they know you understood how it was for them.* Once you sense their emotional level is low, ask them if they would be willing to listen to you now. *Then* share your views, apologies, or whatever.

Now we'll explore why "troublesome" emotions occasionally arise during the most unseemly moments:

Anywhere But Here!

Ever been in a public place when powerful emotions welled up inside of you? If so, did you find yourself fighting back tears of sadness or rage while people carried on conversations around you? Or, ever found your emotions rising just as your mate was exiting the door, or falling asleep?

At these times having discharge may seem inappropriate, even unfair! On the other hand, could it be possible that something bigger than your conscious mind is actually running the show? Could some wise, intuitive part of you know that specific circumstances are necessary—in order to bring specific emotions up from storage?

Here's what happened to Heidi:

Fred: We were in a crowded cafe and Heidi was innocently proceeding toward the register to pay the bill.

Earlier, Heidi had been in the restroom and I had made a critical remark about the food to our waitress. The overworked, pressured and tired waitress had in turn become furious at me, apparently having some discharge of her own which she (her total self) was seeking to be heard on! However, at the time she was just too busy to tell me she was angry.

As Heidi neared the register the enraged waitress began screaming at her in front of a multitude of customers. Having no idea that the waitress was mad about what I'd said, Heidi was dumbfounded. In total shock and fighting back tears, Heidi staggered back through the crowd to our table, whereupon she burst into an uncontrollable pool of tears.

This scenario repeated itself almost exactly several more times (at two more restaurants, and once in a theater) during the rest of that year! Each episode involved some person unjustly blaming Heidi, resulting in her spilling "unmanageable" grief. Each of these incidents occurred in a public place. Sometime during the fourth incident, it dawned on her she was discharging. Up until then she'd been so busy trying to hold back tears she'd never considered the discharge principle! Soon she realized what she was discharging. In childhood she'd undergone several horrific incidents in school (a public place). Once, when a chair was yanked out from under her by a classmate, she had fallen excruciatingly on her tailbone while the other kids laughed. She seemed to have pulled that whole internal "file" on "public humiliation." She could somehow sense it required her to be in public in order to stimulate the release of this particular discharge. She now encouraged it. She'd sit in the midst of the crowd increasing it—allowing memories to resurface. She reported strange sensations: her head spinning, tears trickling down, conversations blurring. The public incidents ceased abruptly. At the same time, something shifted inside of her. She felt a sense of relaxation and fun about being in the public eye. Later when we began to teach workshops, she would totally amaze the rest of us with an utter calmness and radiance that seemed to surround her, even when in the presence of other people's rage (the kind that had previously rendered her emotionally paralyzed!).

Is This My Dear Friend or a Load of Pain from the Past?

After an argument, has your mind ever offered you the thought, "I should leave this relationship"? Given the perspective of considering everything to be either peace or discharge, wouldn't leaving be rather like never eating again, after going to the bathroom?

On the other hand, if emotional discharge is understood as an automatic occurrence which naturally follows experiences of love and safety, the relationship is seen as an effective mechanism for cleaning out old pain (as long as we are having wins with that old pain as it exits) and evolves into deeper and deeper states of intimacy (and clearing). To discover the nature of the discharge (seeking to be heard when you consider leaving), you can ask yourself, "If I were to leave my partner, what would he or she feel? Pain? Shock? Ah! I must want my partner to understand the pain and shock I'm feeling!"

We are not suggesting couples never separate. Rather, to do so based on a decision made from peaceful insight. In our own relationship, we discovered taking action during high-level emotions only succeeded in "passing" those emotions back and forth to each other and perpetuating pain!

We suspect our companionship continues to strengthen due to a decision we made to give our emotional well-being top priority. Here's how it transpired:

Fred: Years ago our vacations were hell—at least the first day, if not the whole trip! By the time we'd pulled out of the driveway far enough to clear the mailbox, we needed a vacation from our vacation! Like starved wolves fighting for fresh kill, our discharge laid in wait (fangs bared), ready to spring upon the first utterance issued forth from the other's mouth.

Inevitably (to Heidi's mind), I had done something wrong, and was about to make things worse...and worse...and worse....

One day it struck me that although our relationship had never been composed entirely of fun and pleasure, in the background lurked a continual expectation that relationships were supposed to be all fun and pleasure!

In that moment I realized I had been living in a subtle (yet potent!) double bind. I had been seeing our relationship as "not enough." Because our relationship had discharge (what could be called "negative" emotion), I had been seeing it as flawed, or wrong. A subconscious drive to keep things fun had me blaming myself (or Heidi) for anything that looked like an argument.

It appeared to me that in order to resolve this conflict I either had to change things outside of me to fit my expectations, or attempt to change my expectations to fit the reality of the situation.

It was an easy choice! I looked around and noticed there were no always happy relationships out there. It seemed only logical for me to align my expectations about "the way our relationship should be" with the widespread condition (that there was always going to be discharge)!

Heidi and I discussed this observation, and agreed upon the logic of making emotional well-being the number one priority in our relationship—above fun, above projects (even above getting to an important event on time). It would mean that when one of us was discharging we would view it as top priority. We decided to go for it.

We were tested on our new conviction, because (like going to the restroom), we couldn't predict when an emotional discharge might occur! Perhaps on our way to a friend's house for dinner, one of us would need to discharge emotionally! Our friends soon grew familiar with "Fred and Heidi sitting out in their car, discharging," and kept our dinners in the oven (we were probably still worth having over, since when we finally did arrive we were sparkly, refreshed and highly entertaining).

After assigning top priority to our emotional well-being, two things occurred. First, we began to see our relationship as "right" or "okay" just the way it was. How we felt was now treated as most important, adding incredible magnitude to our sense of "we-ness." Second, we began having more fun!!!

These days, when we drive past the mailbox, one of us inquires as to the other one's emotional state. After a short period of back and forth discharging and mirroring, we are both refreshed and revitalized. We're ready for our vacation, as opposed to the old way which was to try to "do" vacation over a bunch of pent up emotion.

We observed similar results on vacations with friends. When emotional well-being was given number one priority, fun was the natural, automatic byproduct! In fact, when we would offer this concept to our traveling companions, they were usually amazed and delighted to think their feelings were going to be treated as important.

This may give you the impression that every moment of our lives is dedicated to processing—doesn't sound like much fun, does it? We heartily agree! Before we had these tools the resolution actually did take a lot longer. Now we simply take a few moments every so often, everyday, to acknowledge our feelings and the thoughts accompanying those feelings, whenever one of us senses the presence of feelings that are other than peace. Then we complete the process by talking about things we desire, which infuses the air between us with joy.

Conversation—or Discharge?

Looking back over a horrific argument, it's easy to wonder how things got so out of hand. "One minute we were talking about buying a car...next thing we knew we were so angry we were yelling about divorce!"

We suggest there is a clear turning point—where a "conversation" becomes a "discharge session"—and that we can become expert at identifying this turning point.

As will be discussed in more detail later, your gut instinct is a potent device for determining when an average conversation has drifted into another realm: the realm of discharge. A tightness in your stomach alerts you we are in the presence of discharge, and to assume a mirroring mode. As soon as one person adopts a mirroring mode, a whole flurry of "passing" is averted.

Although the idea sounds simple enough, putting "It's either peace or it's discharge" into practice requires courage and fortitude. Initially we may naturally assume that because our partner is speaking calmly, it can't be discharge! So we continue to engage in what we believe is a normal conversation, responding to their words, both of us getting more and more plugged in. Have you ever been talking with someone, and your gut instinct told you the person was angry? Yet upon inquiry you received the reply, "I'm not angry! Why should I be angry?"

Deciphering exactly what is discharge is not always easy! Often the person appears cool and collected and says they're not angry. What if we don't know the person well enough to ask the level of his or her Emotional Meter?

To determine whether or not someone is discharging, trust what you feel, not necessarily the words they are saying.

A few indications you are in the presence of discharge:

- Are you feeling fear as the person is speaking? Or, perhaps (look carefully) are you feeling shame? Or, any emotion other than peace?
- Do you find yourself wishing they'd shut up, go away or be nicer?
- Is the person implying you are the cause of the problem in some way?
- Is your stomach clenching into a knot as the person speaks?
- Are you feeling confusion or do you have a "spinning" sensation?

By trusting indications such as the above, you can distinguish when you are in the presence of another's discharge. This distinction is the first, immensely crucial step, which sets the tone for your frame of mind, and your actions.

These same guidelines also identify when you are discharging (for instance, if you are implying your partner is to blame). If so, you can request to be mirrored, or mirror yourself. The ability to distinguish your own discharge is as vital as recognizing your partner's.

Observe this phone call between a man and woman, who have been intimate for a few months:

Mark: "I'm calling to say how much I enjoyed our hike the other day."

Lauren: "Me too. Wasn't it fantastic? I couldn't believe the wildflowers!"

Mark: "Yeah...and one of the things that made it really special for me was that I really enjoyed picking the spot. I got to play navigator, decipher the map, and surprise you. I thought I did a pretty good job getting us there and back."

Lauren: "You really did. I love going to places so out of the way."

Mark: "Good. So thanks for letting me do that."

Lauren: "Sure. You're welcome. It was great."

Mark: "The whole time we've been seeing each other, you've always been the one who picked where we went."

Lauren: "Oh?"

Mark: "In fact I wonder sometimes, do you ever actually consider what I'd like to do?"

Lauren: "Well, I hadn't really thought about it..."

Mark: "That's exactly what I'm talking about..."

As their talk continues, Lauren will likely feel confusion and shock. One minute he's lovingly thanking her, the next he's angry. Can you recognize the point where Mark's conversation became discharge?

To her mind all she did was pick up the phone. Suddenly she's being blasted! And, because he's just complimented her, she's open and relaxed, especially vulnerable to the emotions he was seeking to be understood about.

Note the difference the following words would have made if, after having thanked her he'd said:

"I'm having some discharge. I'd like you to mirror me."

Perhaps he notices a tight feeling in his stomach—he identifies he's having other than peace. By saying the above words he has now positioned his partner to be able to fully hear him. Once alerted, Lauren can adopt a mirroring mode, shielding her from taking those emotions into her body. She can also choose not to mirror; perhaps now is not the best time. Either way, by naming the presence of discharge they can maneuver efficiently as opposed to the hurt and distancing that might otherwise occur.

Unlike conversation, mirroring is a technique. It has to be switched on, after deciding to do so. People often remark at the speed and efficiency of mirroring for unraveling an upset, yet, as we've just seen, what seems to snag most couples is figuring out when it's time to mirror! All it takes is one of them to recognize there's discharge in the air. If instead they continue to treat their exchange as conversation, and they never throw the mirroring switch on, pretty soon they're both too emotional to mirror!

To further grasp this idea, let's examine a typical conversation:

—"I caught the Spielberg film at the Del Rio last night."

—"You did? Gosh, I loved it! I took the family. We were all in tears!"

—"I know, me too. Oh! By the way, I've been wondering, you were using that nifty calculator at the office. Where did you find it?"

—"About five blocks from here, on La Mesa Avenue...that discount place that just opened. I'll point it out sometime."

In an average conversation such as this in which there is no emotional charge, two people find themselves in the casual ebb and flow of literal responses to one another's words, offering viewpoints, comments and solutions back and forth. However, a different approach is required when one of them senses the other person is discharging. At that point, this kind of conversational dynamic in which they trade answers, solutions and opinions back and forth tends to halt the "outflow" and destroy the natural completion seeking to take place.

We suggest that a great way to support your partner to complete an emotional state is to first allow him or her the safety to be exactly wherever he or she is. In order to accomplish this, the first trick is to realize that:

These emotions were stored inside of my partner a long time ago!

I am absolutely not the cause of these emotions!

(even though my words or actions may have been the catalyst for their current appearance!)

The next trick (we can't emphasize it enough) is to avoid giving "replies."

When your partner is discharging, and you respond literally to the words he or she is saying (that is, to give replies as one would in a typical conversation), the emotional process is inhibited from going to a natural completion.

Ever watched folks engaged in a loud, boisterous argument? That would be a dramatic example of responding literally to each other's words. One accuses. The other defends. Then they switch.

Once you have identified the person is discharging, we suggest you:

DON'T:

- try to fix the situation
- say you're sorry
- attempt to make it better
- offer solutions
- defend yourself, or...
- give your point of view in any way!

DO: listen, say "tell me more," and *MIRROR!*

As you can see, the woman in the cartoon is giving responses which are all reasonable. However, if her partner's emotional level is high, those responses will halt the flow of his discharge (and he will become either more frustrated, hopeless or sad and distant). He'll never get to find out what's underneath his upset, what's really driving him. And, he'll never get to have the wonderful feeling of being "lighter," the way one feels after being heard and understood.

Heidi: We were driving home after a meeting about a video production we were considering. I told Fred I was feeling anger. "Sometimes," I blurted out, "I absolutely cannot stand the way you treat me in front of other people!"

I lectured him on the atrocities of social humiliation and males who dominate females. Finally I concluded proudly, "I'm simply not going to take it anymore!" Cool as a cucumber, Fred prompted me to continue.

An innocent passerby probably would have urged Fred to refuse to let me "dump" on him like that (and advised him to drop me off at the nearest corner!). The untrained eye might have pegged Fred as a placating, co-dependent wimp in need of standing up for himself! While I discharged, he gently encouraged. Because of his years of practice, he thought, "If it isn't peace it must be discharge!" This enabled him to immediately identify that what I was experiencing was obviously not peace (due to the emotion in my voice, and

given what he felt as I was talking). He then supported me in “taking the stops off,” so to speak. He encouraged me to say more, occasionally mirroring back to me the essence of what I was saying (“So, that was really frustrating and embarrassing when I wouldn’t let you speak, huh?”).

Minutes later, Fred was strong, resilient, and completely undamaged by my emotional downpour. And I was happy—incredibly grateful to be relieved of a chunk of emotion from my past. In my new-found peace I was automatically prompted to inquire whether he had any “residue” from my discharge, and to mirror him. The whole episode lasted no more than maybe twenty minutes. What could have been a two day battle ended up deepening our relationship, and made it simple for us to move forward to an agreement about how we would work together around other people.

Fun and Passion

The loss of passion and fun in a relationship is usually chalked up to a belief that “It happens to everybody, given the inevitability of time and boredom.” There’s also the belief “We just don’t have that chemistry anymore.”

If power, passion, safety and fun are missing in your relationship, we suggest the possibility they’re not lost, but merely covered over by chunks of emotion that were on their way out (discharging) when someone responded to the literal content of the words (or left physically), which short circuited the process.

Ever heard the saying, “You are the creator of your own reality”?

The Discharge Principle opens you to the possibility that yes, you did create the problem, but not consciously. Rather, it happened because some unacknowledged pain from your past had it happen. Your job then is to acknowledge and feel the emotions (especially shame, whenever you’re stuck in blaming someone else), and to “clean up” any mess your discharge might have left the other person. For example you might say to your partner, “My discharge came out pretty dirty this afternoon. I called you some names. That was just a chunk of emotion from my past. Do you have any residue from it? Would you like me to mirror you?”

Another example: Imagine your partner lets the screen door slam. You are asleep and it startles you awake. Suddenly you are in reaction to being rudely awakened. You take a quick assessment of where your partner is at in the moment (Is he or she running to reach the store before it closes? If so, you make a note in your mind to bring the subject up later). Once you decide your partner is not too busy (or too emotional) to be able to hear you, you say:

“I have some discharge. Can you mirror me?”

By saying these words before you say what you are actually upset about, you denote caring for both of you. You have now set up a safe arena for a win-win exchange.

Now let’s turn it around. This time, your partner is the one having the discharge. Notice what you feel when he or she handles discharge in the following way:

Picture walking in on your companion. He or she is sitting in a chair, eyes closed. “What’s up?” you inquire. You hear a moan, then the reply, “I’m having a ton of discharge right now. Could you mirror me?”

“Sure. Go ahead,” you say.

“Well, it’s really got your face on it. I think it’s from my past, when my sister used to get all the attention from Dad. I guess I got plugged in this afternoon, when you and Ray were talking about going into business together.”
Do you sense the way it would “take you off the hook” if your partner used phrases like those? You might actually be intrigued to stay and offer support! On the other hand, if instead you heard, “Guess I’d better get used to working alone—soon you’ll be in business with Ray!” can you sense the wall this erects? It includes no invitation for the two of you to tackle the upset, together.
Having read these examples are you feeling hopeless or sad? Are you thinking, “I could never get my partner to treat me that way!” Or, “Forget it! No way could I act like that when I’m upset!” Maybe you are single and you’re sighing, “What good is any of this if I don’t have a partner to share it with?” If in a relationship, are you sadly reflecting on times the two of you criticized, blamed or accused?

On the other hand perhaps you’re thinking happily, “I’m sure glad my partner and I don’t blame each other!”

We invite you to consider that whatever you’re feeling, or not feeling, is part of a natural and appropriate process on the way to having exactly what you want. We suggest you take a moment to allow those feelings to pass through you. Then think of what it is you want (a loving partner for instance) and picture yourself having it, until you can feel a bubbly happiness rising within you.

The slowing/erasing of the blaming cycle is born from repeatedly listening to your partner, and experiencing your partner listening to you. All it takes is one, single success to know that jumping in with your own reaction isn’t the only way to attempt being heard. Success grows over time, like an oak tree. The habit grows. You begin to foresee the results of what you’re about to say, instead of rushing blindly in with the same old replies and defenses during the heat of the moment. When did that work anyway?

One day, you are willing to be the one to mirror first, to risk looking wrong, to dare to “be present” during another’s discharge. One day you discover yourself allowing another person to be fully angry at you, and you truly know it’s not about you—you are becoming the parent you always wanted!

No rush. One of our teachers used to say, “Dumb wears off,” meaning that through trial and error, we do learn.

Once again, how do we know if it’s discharge?

Simple. It is a decision or a position we take that:

Summary and Helpful Hints

Similar to the way the physical body takes in food and goes to the bathroom, our mental and emotional bodies take in experience, then release unneeded thoughts and emotions from storage. We call this discharge.

Incomplete emotional experiences are constantly seeking safe outlets for completion. (and have even been suspected of magnetizing upsetting circumstances in order to find release) Our intimate relationships, being safe, become locations for the release of stored emotions, even though we may not consciously believe them to be. These releases point to what is right about the relationship (i.e. it is safe, and we are evolving) rather than that something’s wrong.

Thinking from the Discharge Principle:
—helps us identify the presence of an upset.
—allows us more choices of effective action.

The level (and length) of intimacy, affinity and warmth achieved between partners is directly related to how they view and deal with so-called “negative” emotions.

Until childhood experiences become conscious and felt, the most likely way they will look for completion is by being triggered in the relationship.

When emotional discharge is understood as an automatic occurrence, which naturally follows experiences of love and safety, the relationship evolves into deeper and deeper states of intimacy.

A “higher force” determines when it’s time to discharge. The timing has little to do with one’s conscious desire. The Self will decide to release a particular piece of discharge when it determines it’s now safe to do so. This process may require our environment to closely replicate the way things looked at the time those emotions went into storage.

Our job is simply to cooperate (flow) with the natural inclination to discharge—when it arises.

Unfelt emotions get stored, color all other experiences, and can manifest physically as disease. To complete them, take a moment to increase/explore them. Then “install” the new images of what you want for your life, accompanied by a surge of joy.

There are clear turning points, where “conversations” become “discharge sessions.” We can become expert at identifying those turning points.

A tightness in our stomach alerts us we’re in the presence of discharge, and to assume the mirroring mode. As soon as one of us takes the mirroring stance, a whole flurry of “passing” is averted.

Often the person appears calm, or says he’s not angry. Again, to establish whether or not someone is discharging, trust what you feel, not necessarily the words they speak.

Responding in a literal way to the words the person is saying halts the flow of his/her discharge. This includes trying to fix the situation, apologizing, defending or commenting. By maintaining a mirroring mode, we stay out of “reactive” replies.

Helpful phrases: “You’re perfect the way you are. You didn’t do anything wrong. This is (or that was) just some discharge from my past.” “I’m having some discharge. Would you mirror me?”

Exercises

1. Yvonne and Adele are writing a song for a children’s play. Identify where Yvonne’s words have switched, from conversation to discharge:

Yvonne: “Okay. I’ve eliminated the second verse. Do you think that messes it up?”

Adele: “No. I actually think it sounds better.”

Yvonne: “Well, it’s a children’s song. It’s probably better short.”

Adele: “I think so. Want to see if we can find a funnier rhyme for the first verse?”

Yvonne: “Sure. Let’s see, I’ve got ‘Cows in June, dazzling moons’.”

Adele: “How ‘bout ‘Cows in June, forks and spoons’?”

Yvonne: “Great!”

Adele: “Say, want to get something to eat? I’m starved!”

Yvonne: “Look, if this project doesn’t interest you I can find somebody else.”

Adele: “No, I’m enjoying it! Just a bit hungry that’s all!”

Yvonne: “Oh. You’re hungry.”

Adele: “It’s just that I skipped lunch, because I had to get to the bank.

Tomorrow’s a holiday.”

Yvonne: “Yesterday, I spent two solid hours helping you with your damn insurance claim. Now I need help, I have a time limit, and you have to eat?”

Adele: “It’s just a bite, Yvonne! Look, if it makes you feel better I’ll skip it, and be hungry!”

Yvonne: “So now I should feel guilty? Forget it! Let’s call it a day....”

Adele: “Fine with me.”

Answer: *Where conversation turned into discharge:* Yvonne: “Look, if this project doesn’t interest you I can find somebody else.”

2. If you are currently in an intimate relationship, jot down ways in which you have been, perhaps inadvertently, “getting in the way” of your partner’s discharge. If you have children: when they have sadness, anger or fear, do you generally hear them before offering solutions? List things you do or say that might be suppressing their discharge.

3. Check your emotional level. If sadness, grief, shame, anger, guilt, confusion or fear came up for you during the above exercises, and is still present for you:

a. Take a moment, relax, and increase it. Remember, it’s discharge!

b. Ask yourself: “Does what I’m feeling right now remind me of anything from my childhood?” (there’s no right or wrong answer) If yes, what happened?

c. Acknowledge your positive intent for anything you did which these emotions may be associated with.

4. If you are doing these exercises with a partner and you both wish to continue:
—Practice your mirroring skills. First check Emotional Meters to determine who will mirror who. Then use the 1, 2, 3 (and 4) Method.

—Remember to check emotional levels now and then, and switch accordingly.

—Conclude with an activity that is relaxing and enjoyable to you both, or set a time to do that fun activity later (and make sure to fulfill it).

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.

©2003 Fred J. Keyser

Additional Reports available:

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