The Roadmap

Strategies that Heal the Emotionally Destructive Marriage

Leslie Vernick LCSW



What's Wrong?



خداع الغوريلا (مونكي بيزنس) دانيال سيمونس

The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice there is little we can do to change. Until we notice how our failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.

Daniel Goleman

Difficult?

Disappointing?

Destructive?



When is the line crossed??





Five types of destructive behaviors

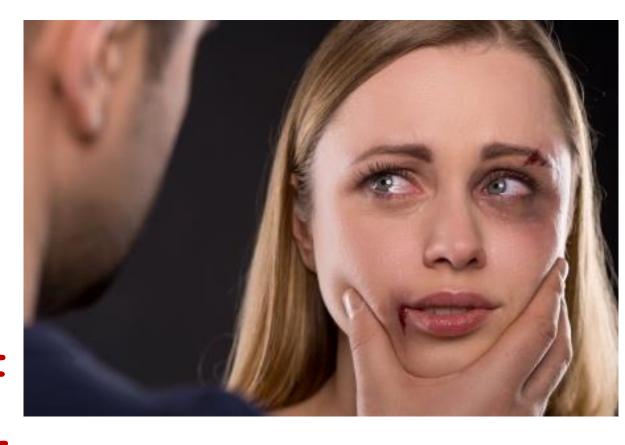


Reactive Abuse

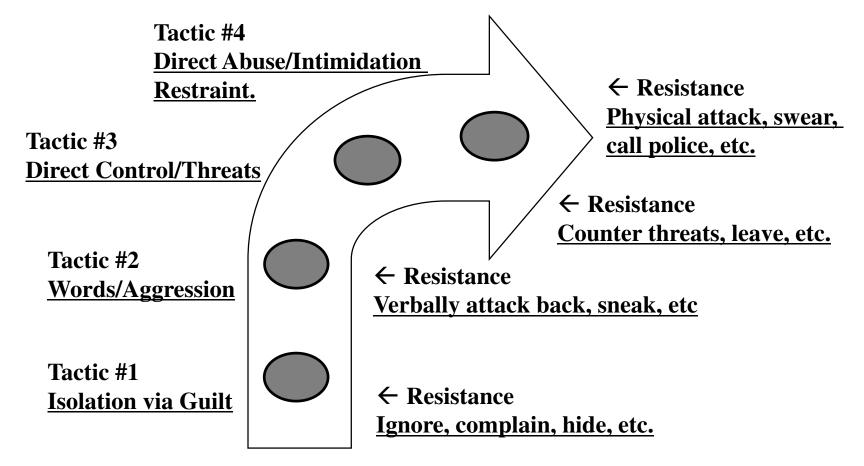


Gross imbalance of power and control

Attitude of entitlement



Escalation



Hyper-headship is a satanic distortion of male leadership, but it can fly under the radar of discernment because it is disguised as strong male leadership. Make no mistake it is harsh, oppressive, and controlling. In other words, hyper-headship becomes a breeding ground for domestic abuse.

Jason Meyer, pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis



Emotional Abuse

With their words the godless destroy their friends. Proverbs 11:9

Reckless words pierce like a sword.

Proverbs 12:18

No one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.

Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth.

SURELY MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THIS IS NOT RIGHT.

James 3:8-10

Raging Constant criticism Ridiculing Demeaning Belittling

Withholding Restricting Isolating Threatening Abandoning

Coercing Accusing Ordering Ignoring Minimizing

Subtle non-verbal cues Repeatedly denying one's reality Negative labeling Chronic deceit

"Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor; you're an expert at telling lies. You love evil more than good and lies more than truth. You love to destroy others with your words, you liar!" (Psalm 52:2-5).



"Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles... .. My heart pounds in my chest. The terror of death assaults me. Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking. It is not an enemy who taunts me—I could bear that. It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me— I could have hidden from them. Instead, it is you—my equal, my companion and close friend" (Psalm 55:2,4,5,13).

"Their insults have broken my heart and I am in despair."



Psalm 69:20

Emotional abuse is real and crushes the spirit.



Emotional abuse systematically degrades, diminishes and eventually can destroy the personhood of the other.

Sexual Abuse



Economic Abuse



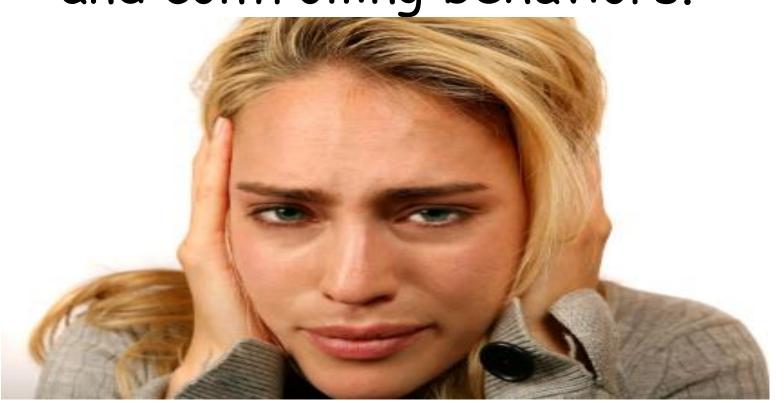
Spiritual Abuse



An EDM may also have patterns of

Chronic Deceit
Chronic Dependency
Chronic Indifference

Deceit, humiliation, crazy making and controlling behaviors.



An emotionally destructive marriage is one where one's personhood, dignity and freedom of choice is regularly denied, criticized, or crushed.

This can be done through words, behaviors, economics, attitudes, and misusing the scriptures.





Every 9 Seconds



Leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44.

More than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined!



Pastor kills wife to marry gay lover



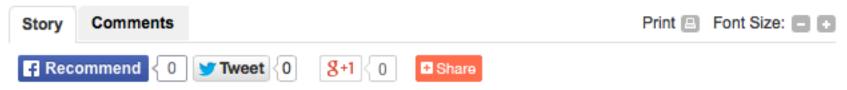
NEWS EXPRESS — Richard Shahan, a former Alabama, U.S., pastor, has been accused of stabbing his wife to death so that he could leave the country to marry his boyfriend.

A report by AL.com says prosecutors leveled that theory against Shahan during a hearing in the case Thursday in which the former pastor's bond was set at \$100,000.

"Prosecutors contend information obtained from Shahan's emails show he was

planning to leave the country and never return. They say he was intending to travel to Kazakhstan via Germany and ultimately planned to reside in the United Kingdom, reports the news site," according to the report.

Houston pastor accused of killing wife



Posted: Wednesday, June 9, 2010 12:00 am | Updated: 3:36 pm, Fri Dec 14, 2012.

Associated Press |

HOUSTON — A Houston minister has been charged with murder over the May 18 shooting death of his wife at their home.

No bond had been set Wednesday for 44-year-old Pastor Tracy Bernard ``T.B." Burleson. Harris County Sheriff's Office jail records did not indicate an attorney for Burleson.

Investigators say the victim was 56-year-old Pauletta Ross Burleson.

Sgt. Curtis Brown says the pastor was arrested Tuesday, along with a man and a woman. Details on formal charges against the pair were not immediately available.

Police: Pastor shot wife, daughter before stabbing self

Posted: Jan 11, 2013 4:55 PM EST Updated: May 28, 2014 3:54 PM EDT

By Melynda Sides - email

GARDENDALE, AL (WBRC) - A pastor of a Gardendale church shot his wife and daughter before stabbing himself multiple times inside their home, police announced in a news conference held Friday.

Gardendale police say Rev. Terry Greer, 54, shot his wife Lisa Greer, 52, and their 18-year-old daughter Suzanna at their home on Thursday. Police Chief Mike Walker said Suzanna wrestled the pistol away from her father, then ran to a neighbor's house for help. The neighbor called Gardendale police, who responded to the Greers' home in the 5800 block of Country Meadow Drive.

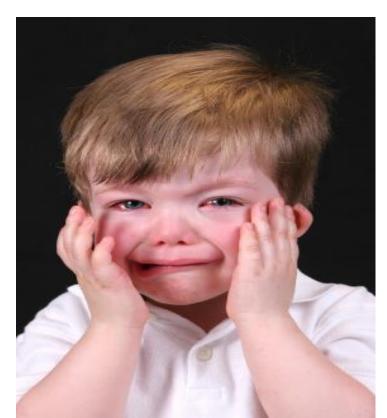
When officers arrived at the home, they found Terry Greer repeatedly stabbing himself with a kitchen knife in the bathroom. The officers stopped him from stabbing himself in the chest and neck and restrained him. The police chief said Greer "resisted arrest" but did not elaborate.

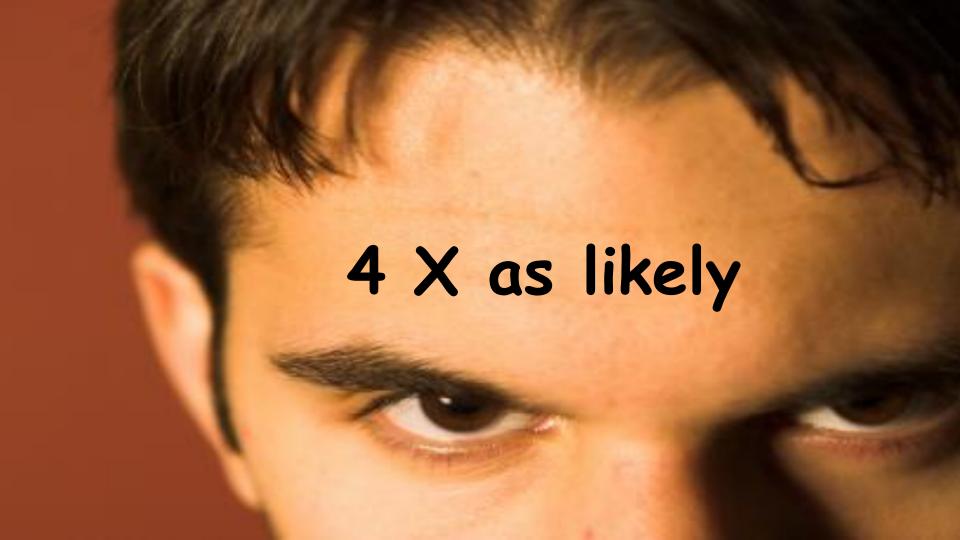
All three family members were transported to the hospital for treatment.

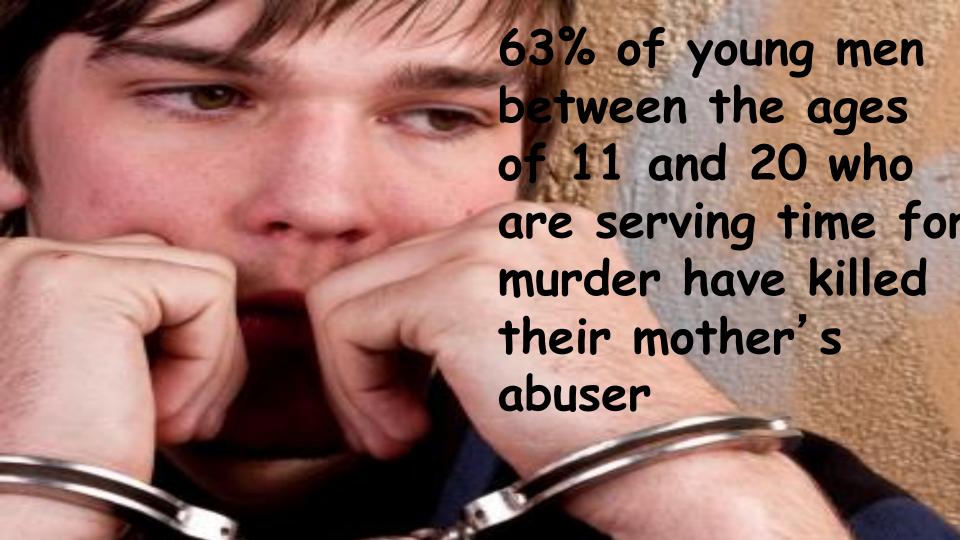
The coroner's office confirmed that Lisa Greer died early Friday morning from her wounds. Gardendale police said this afternoon that Suzanna Greer is in stable condition office undergoing



3.3 million children witness violence toward their mothers









40% of girls 14-17 know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by their boyfriend.



1 in 3 teenage girls has feared for her safety in a dating relationship



How Do We Look at Domestic Violence Biblically?





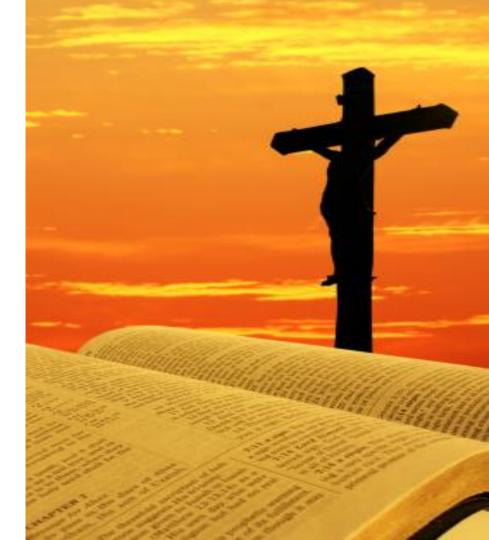




Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 5:1,2; Ephesians 6:21-29



How Do We RESPOND Biblically?





It is good to protect yourself from violent people.

Proverbs 27:12

It is good to expose deeds done in darkness. Ephesians 5:11

It is good to speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:25

It is good to stop someone from sinning against you when possible.

Matthew 18:15-18; James 5:19-20; Proverbs 19:19

It is good for someone to experience the consequences of his /her behavior Galatians 6:7

It is good to see the fruits of repentance before reconciling.

Genesis 42-45

It is good to be gracious to your enemy.

Romans 12:20

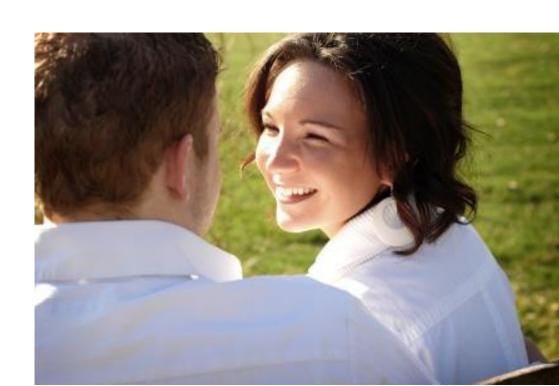
It is good to pursue your own good and the good of others. 1 Thessalonians 5:15

Godly Marriage

Loving Partnership Conflict involves solving a problem not attacking a person Damages are repaired through confession, restitution and change

Mutuality

Caring Honesty Respect Responsibility Repentance



Healthy marriage The Christian teaching [on marriage] does not offer a choice between fulfillment and sacrifice but rather mutual fulfillment through mutual sacrifice

Tim Keller

Reciprocity

Shared Power & Responsibility



He writes, "For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness" (2 Corinthians 8:13-14 ESV).

Freedom



A healthy adult relationship is one where both people in the relationship give and both receive.

There is a safe and open exchange of ideas, feelings and thoughts and all perspectives are considered and valued.

There is also the freedom to respectfully challenge, confront and strengthen one another.

What to listen for

- 1. Imbalance of power and control in the relationship
- 2. Consistent lack of mutuality.
- 1. Lack of freedom to speak up, have an opinion that is different, disagree, or make choices on his/her own.
- 2. Consistent indifference to his/her partners needs, feelings, desires, thoughts.
- 3. Blame-shifting, minimizing, and lack of responsibility for wrongs committed in the marriage.
 - 4. An attitude of entitlement.

Helpful Questions to Ask

- 1. Have you ever been threatened or physically hurt in this relationship?
- 2. Have you ever been an unwilling participant in a sexual act?
- 3. Do you ever feel fearful around your partner?
- 4. Are there times you don't trust your partner?
- 5. Do you have the freedom to make decisions, give your input and say no to things?
- 6. Can you respectfully challenge and confront the attitudes, decisions and behaviors of your partner? If not, what happens when you try?

When was the first time?

When was the last time?

When was the worst time?

Describe a typical time?

BONUS E-BOOK

LeslieVernick.com/f reegift

The Art Of Asking Great Questions



Leslie Vernick LCSW

Taking a careful history of the marriage you are looking for patterns of healthy behaviors, a well as patterns of abusive behavior, often escalating in frequency and intensity.

7 Destructive Heart Themes

The selfish heart

The proud heart

The angry heart

The envious heart

The lazy heart

The fearful heart

The evil heart

Philippians 3:19

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 29:22

James 3:16

Proverbs 18:9

Proverbs 29:25

Proverbs 21:10

People Affect & Influence Us



When someone dumps their toxic feelings on us - explodes in anger or threats, shows disgust or contempt - they activate in us a circuitry for the very same distressing emotions

Daniel Goleman

Physical Emotional Mental Relational Spiritual





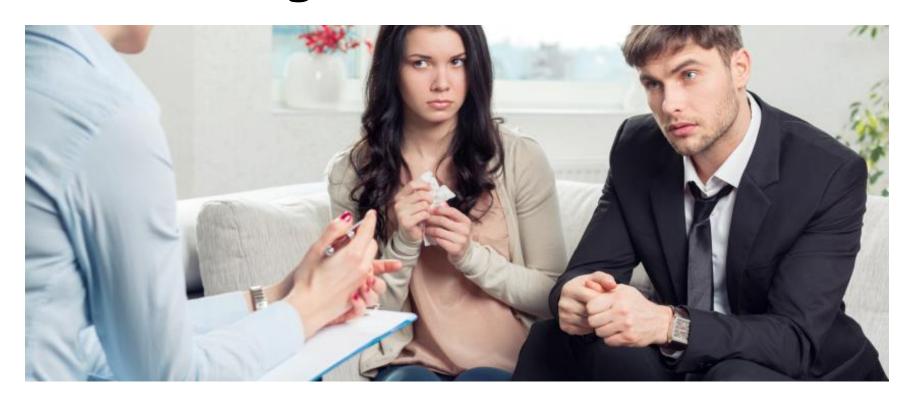
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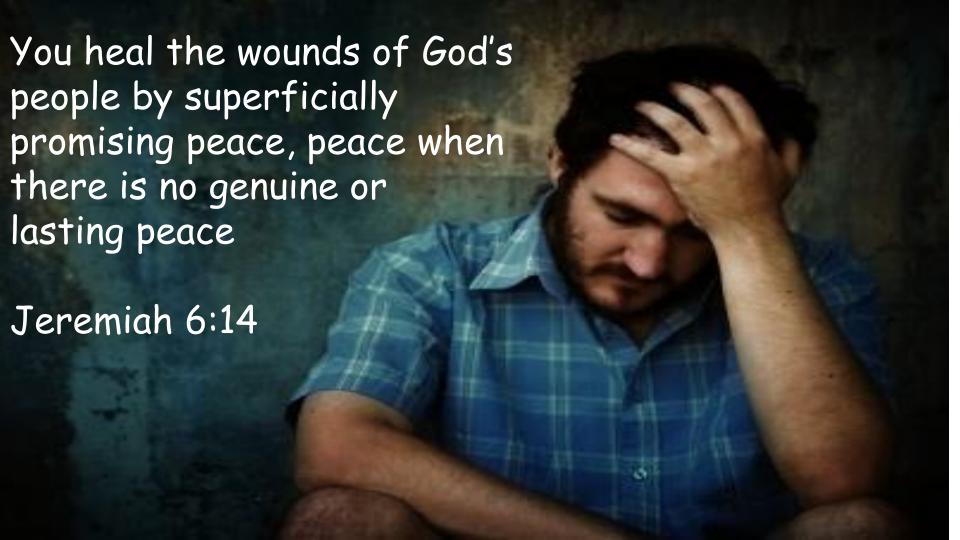
Like a plant adapting to rich or to depleted soil, a child's brain shapes itself to fit its social ecology, particularly the emotional climate fostered by the main people in her life.....

Parenting cannot change every gene, nor modify every neural tic - and yet what children experience day after day sculpts their neural circuitry.

Daniel Goleman

Strategies for Treatment





Marriage is a picture of Christ and his bride, the Church



Four Stage

Treatment Plan 1.SAFETY

2.SANITY

3.STABILITY

4. SECURITY

SAFETY

I will say to the prisoners, "Come out in freedom" and to those in darkness, "Come into the light." Isaiah 49:9





The prudent see danger and take refuge.

Proverbs 27:12



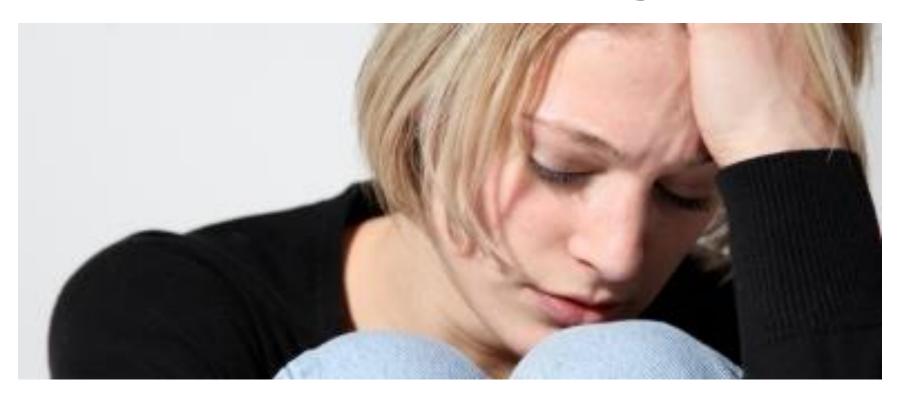
 Validate her biblical right to safety

· Help develop safety plan

Working with the Victim



How is she doing?



- She may show signs of CTSD and/or major depression.
- She may be struggling with chronic health issues due to the stress.
- She may have lost her ability to think for herself. She may feel and act a little unstable.
- She may be reacting sinfully to his controlling and destructive behavior.
- She may want to separate NOW.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	Complex Traumatic Stress Disorder
Literature on war-related trauma	Literature on child sexual abuse
Isolated traumatic events	Multiple traumatic events; chronic trauma.
Trauma source not usually an intimate relationship	Trauma source includes intimate relationships
Examples: war-related trauma, natural disasters, single rape (adult), physical injury	Examples: Child abuse and/or neglect (physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual or combinations), domestic violence
Relatively short term therapy Heather Gingrich Restoring the Shattered Self: A	Long-term therapy Christian Counselors Guide to Complex Trauma Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder

Common symptoms of CTSD and Depression

CTSD	Major Depression
Feeling numb	Numbness
Hi anxiety hyperarousal	Loss of interest in things previously enjoyed.
Inability to control emotions; triggered easily.	Feeling like she has no emotions other than sadness and hopelessness
Feeling disconnected from self	Disappointed with self/guilt and shame
Physical problems	Physical problems
Unable to think clearly	Confusion
Where is God?	Where is God?

This is NOT the time to talk about "her sin"



 Validate her biblical right to safety

Help develop safety plan

LETHALITY CHECK LIST

- D Divorce or Separation
- A Alcohol or Drug Use
- N Narcissistic Tendencies
- G Guns or weapons around
- E Emotionally Unstable
- R Rebellious
- O Other Violent Behaviors
- U Unpredictable Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde
- 5 Suicide or Homicide Threats

• Go over in detail the tension stage of the abuse cycle. What are the patterns?

 Help her to notice when the tension is building and begin to implement her safety plan before the incident happens.

 Where will she go? How will she get her kids out? Who will she call? How will she prepare?

When there is physical abuse consult with professionals:

Domestic Violence Hotline 1 800 799 SAFE

For Him



- Willingness to be accountable
- · Willingness to submit to authority
- · Willingness to learn self-control
- · Acceptance of consequences

PROMSE 10 PROMISE 10 I PROMISE TO 1 PROMISE TO I PROMISE TO

MUST PRACTICE



- · Time Out's
- Respecting Stated Boundaries
- Identifying triggers
- Freedom to say no
- Learning to tolerate negative emotions without abuse

It's important for the therapist not to negotiate safety—you may need to be tough!





When physical safety is at risk

 When physical problems in the body are indicative of extreme stress

When emotional stress is unbearable

 When all else has been tried to wake a partner up to his/her destructive ways



Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is. How it pierces to the heart. Jeremiah 4:18

Blindness not Brokenness



Unwillingness to SEE
Unwillingness to CONFESS
Unwillingness to GET HELP

Wrong Theology



I believe I am...

- *Entitled to forgiveness
- *Entitled to trust without having to make amends
- *Entitled to instant reconciliation

Unacknowledged and unrepentant sin

separates us from God and from others!

Unconditional love does NOT require

Unconditional Relationship



If there is no safety, there is no healing and you cannot move forward.





When is Marital Counseling Not Appropriate?



1. When one can't speak honestly or is afraid of repercussions



2. When one or both individuals are not thinking clearly or truthfully: Individual or group work may be more beneficial





Gives her false hope that if she tries harder, she can fix this.

Gives him the impression that you agree with him that she is the problem.

Reinforces his entitlement

4. When you cannot or should not stay neutral



In the end what hurt the most is not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.

Martin Luther King





When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is bad, your whole world is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is.

Identify the Lies that keep the destructive patterns going

Common Beliefs of Destructive Persons

- · She's overreacting or exaggerating.
- It's her fault, if she would only do what I say....this wouldn't happen.
- I'm the head of the house, therefore she should do what I say.
- My money is my money. She is not an equal partner.
- I'm entitled to sex no matter what.
- If she respects me, she won't disagree or challenge my decisions.

Common Beliefs of Destructive Persons (con't)

- . If I get hurt, she deserves to get hurt back.
- . Forgiving means forgetting and never bringing it up again.
- . If I said I'm sorry, then everything should be better.
- . If she doesn't know, it won't hurt her our our marriage.
- . If I don't hit her, then it's not abuse.

Common beliefs for those who allow themselves to be mistreated

- . It must be something I'm doing, it's my fault.
- . If only I try harder, he will change.
- . God wants me to stay, no matter what.
- . If I leave, God will punish me.
- . It's better for the children for me to stay.
- . I can't live alone.
- . If only I could get through to him, he would be a great person.

Common beliefs for those who allow themselves to be mistreated

- . He needs my help.
- . No one else would want me.
- . I don't deserve to be treated better.
- . There must be something wrong with me that he would treat me this way, especially when he treats everyone else great.
- . This is normal, I don't know any different.
- . I must suffer quietly for Christ.

Faulty beliefs of People Helpers

- ✓ God hates divorce more than anything else he hates therefore, stay together at all costs.
- ✓ Suffering is a virtue, therefore, if you are suffering in your marriage suffer well and you be an example of Christ to your husband.
- ✓ We have no rights, therefore to speak up and set boundaries on your spouse is unbiblical.

Faulty beliefs of People Helpers

- ✓ You are both sinners, you are the worst sinner you know so therefore it's unacceptable for you to speak about someone else's sin or implement consequences or boundaries on that behavior.
- ✓ Forgiveness means automatic trust and reconciliation.
- ✓ You can't work on your marriage if you aren't living together.

For Her



- · See clearly
- · Develop CORE Strength
- · Clarify her role

Develop her CORE

C Committed to truth
O Open to growth
R Responsible and respectful
Empathic and compassionate

C - Committed to TRUTH

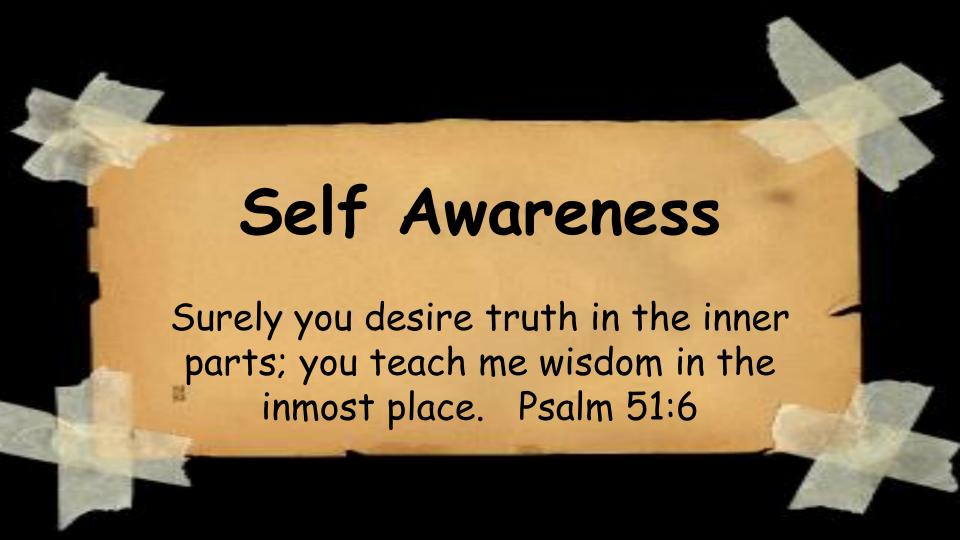
Restoring Sanity



When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is bad, your whole world is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is.

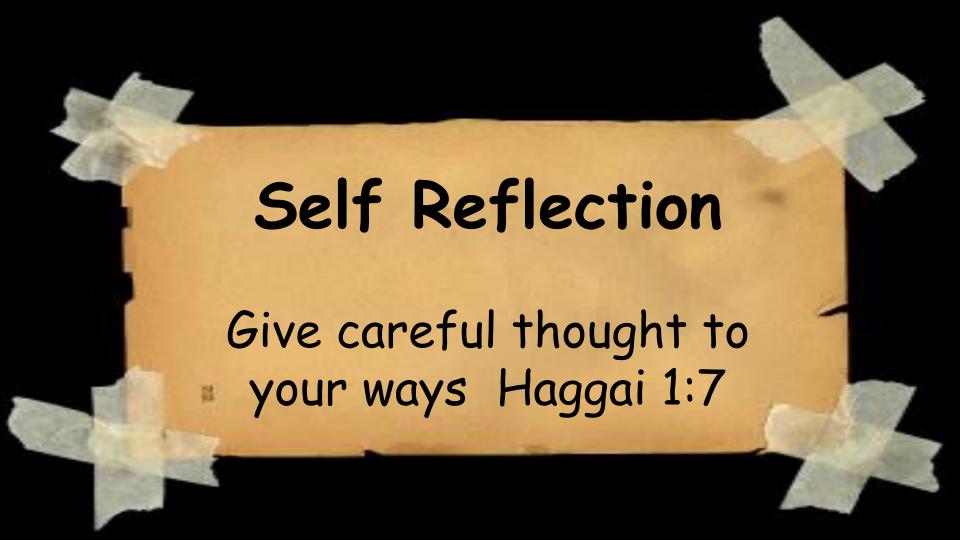
Stop Pretending

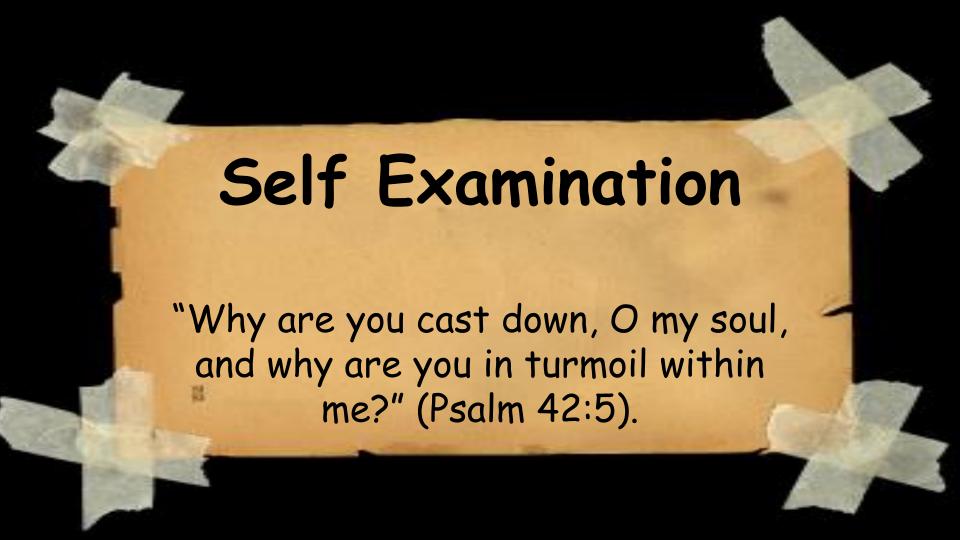




A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.

Proverbs 14:15



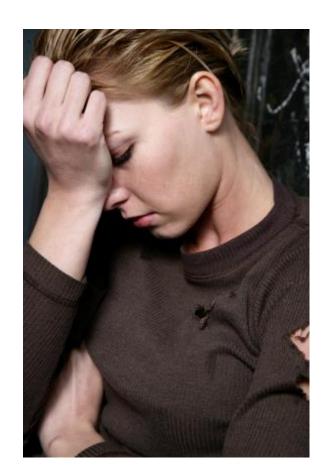




goodness, faithfulness, gentleness

and self control" (Galatians 5:22).

Identify the lies she believes



Help her see the thought/feeling connection.

My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught. Psalm 55:2

How we see things affects everything



O - I will be Open to the Holy Spirit and Wise others



Help her identify her own role in the destructive dance (Enabler, minimizer, pretender, peacekeeper/peacefaker/ placater, rescuer) and teach her new dance steps. (Romans 12:21)

Persecutor

Rescuer

Destructive Dance

Victim

Karpman Triangle

God Centered Woman



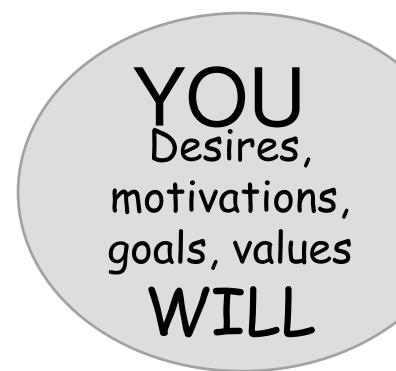
"Every inordinate emotion—of anxiety, fear, anger, pride—is all because we are forgetting who God is."

Tim Keller

He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. Psalm 107:20

Genuine self knowledge begins by looking at God and noticing how God is looking at us. Grounding our knowing of our self in God's knowing of us, anchors us in reality. It also anchors us in God.

David Benner PhD



Your Thoughts



Your Feelings

R- Responsible for myself and respectful towards others without dishonoring myself



Owners

Victims

Determine how to respond

React to life's circumstances

Determine the kind of person she will become

Allow life to determine the person she becomes

Shapes circumstances to create new outcomes

Allow circumstances to shape her and feels helpless to change

Problem solvers who take action & strategize

Feel helpless and stuck

 What IS she responsible for and what is she NOT responsible for?

 She is responsible TO her spouse but not FOR her spouse. Persecutor

Rescuer

Destructive Dance

Victim

Karpman Triangle

Practice helping her "speak the truth in love, taking responsibility for herself and being respectful towards her husband.

Help her practice being non-reactive to his destructive ways.

/ Help her establish appropriate boundaries and consequences.

E - Empathetic and Compassionate without enabling



Your kindness will reward you, but your cruelty will destroy you.

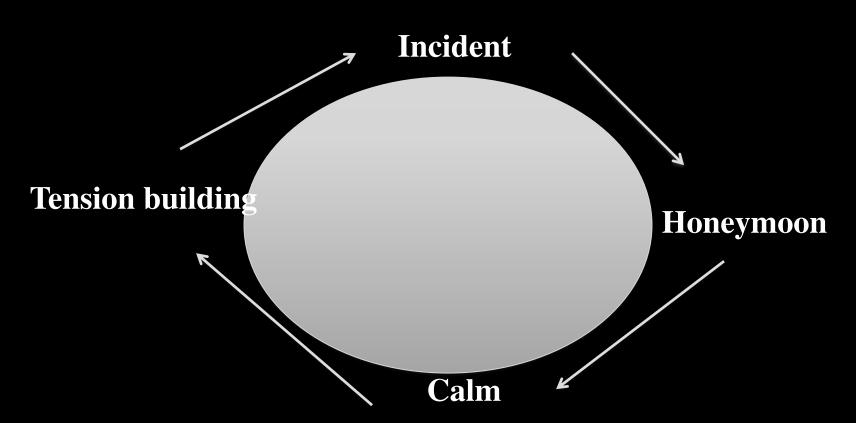
Proverbs 11:17

✓ Explore bitterness and teach alternative ways of guarding her heart.

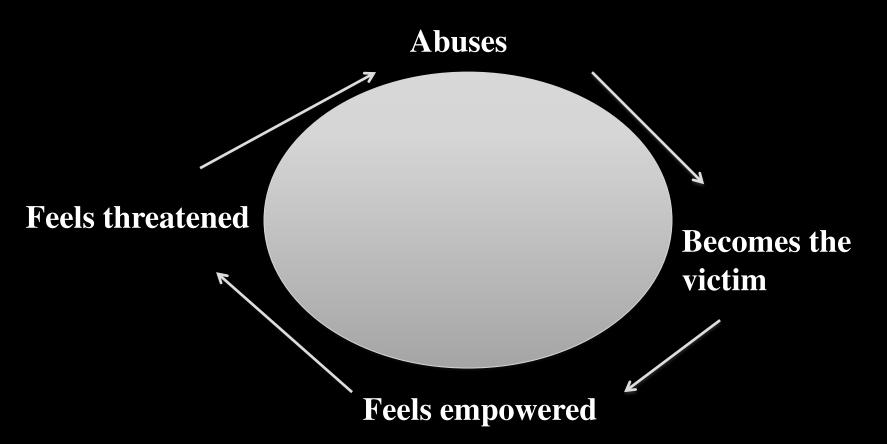
I Trust must be rebuilt, it is earned not given foolishly.

I Teach her how to respond with empathy but still stand strong against destructive patterns.

Abuse Cycle



Alternate Cycle



ROMSE PROMISC 10 PROMISE T PROMISE PROMISE

Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart, when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed to the assembly.

Proverbs 26:24



✓ Brainstorm appropriate consequences

✓ Validate and encourage the growth she is making

Help her initiate and invite healthy change

Are you happy?



What do you see as our most important goal or challenge as a couple if we're going to improve our relationship

What is the single most important thing you want to be as a husband and father?



Continue support: Groups work best



Help her (him) Put the marriage in it's proper place



Become a God-centered woman and not a husband centered woman (or marriage - centered woman)

"The only thing I did is follow God. First I was being shown that my unhealthy attachment to my husband was idolatry. I repented of that and prayed that he be broken, knowing full well that it might mean the end of our marriage." A woman who is getting stronger

What's wrong with trying harder?



Gives her false hope that if she tries harder, she can fix this.

Gives him the impression that you agree with him That She is the primary problem.

Reinforces his entitlement



Clarify her role

Her biblical role as his helpmate is not to prop him up to enable him to continue to sin.

It is much more risky and redemptive than that.



For Him

- · See wife differently
- · Take responsibility
- Challenge fantasies, lies and wrong thinking
- · Develop empathy for wife

Be Careful: Don't Nullify God's Law of Consequences



For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the Lord. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them.

THEREFRORE, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, chocking on their own schemes." Proverbs 1:30,31

Sorrow isn't necessarily Biblical repentance



But if anyone has this worlds goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth

(1 John 3:17,18).

You trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known and then come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say, 'We are delivered - only to go on doing all these abominations?

(Jeremiah 7:8,10)

Fruit of Repentance

- 1. Accepts full responsibility no blaming
- 2. Shows empathy for the pain he's caused
- 3. Accepts consequences without conditions
- 4. Makes amends for damages
- 5. Continues to learn and grow
- 6. Willing to work over the long run
- 7. Long term accountability



Amends rather than amnesty

Forgiveness does not automatically mean reconciliation.

- 1. Willing to take ownership for the pain they've caused.
- 2. Willing to be accountable for the damage they've caused.
- 3. Willing to do the necessary work and are grateful for the chance to do so.

Five C's of Lasting Change

- 1. Clarity
- 2. Commitment
- 3. Confession
- 4. Community
- 5. Consequences

Willing but not yet capable

Stages 1 and 2 Change of Heart

Stages 3 and 4 Change of Habit

Evidence of a Change of Heart

Humble versus proud
Willing versus Willful
Grateful versus Entitled
God-centered versus self-centered
Love filled versus fear-filled

A persuaded mind and even a well intentioned heart is a long way from exact and faithful practice



Francois Fenelon



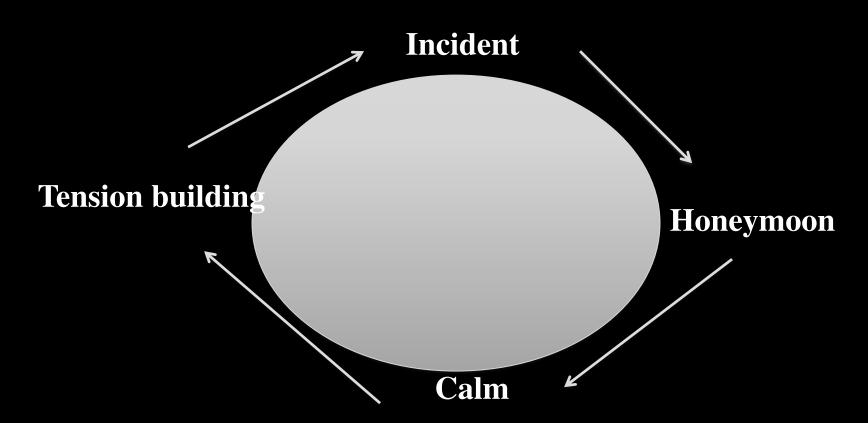
STABILITY



Prove by the way that you live that you have repented of your sin and turned to God.



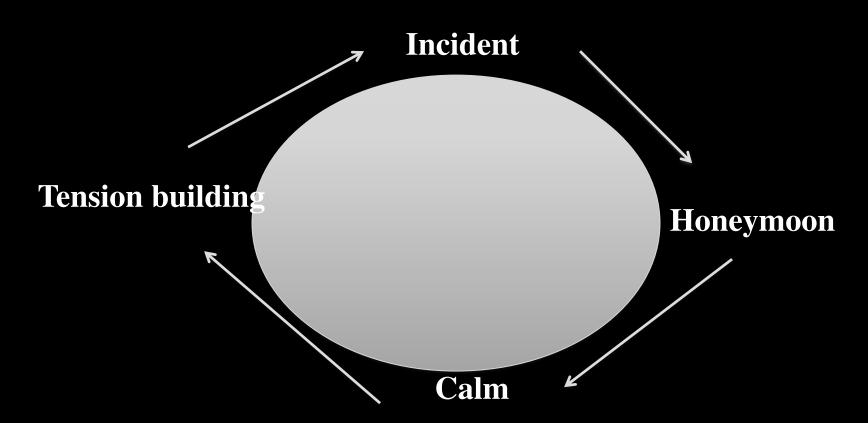
Abuse Cycle (old history)



What does new history look like?

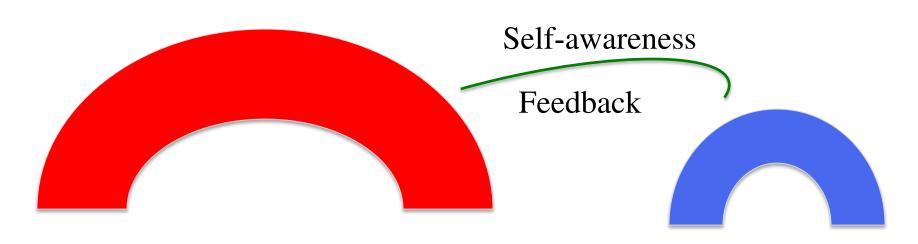
- Ability to recognize and own his/her problem (see clearly)
- Willing to receive feedback from others humbly (Teachable)
- Respect and care for the personhood of the other (safety and sanity)
- Willingness to work hard over the long term.
 (creates stability)

Abuse Cycle (old history)



Old History

New History



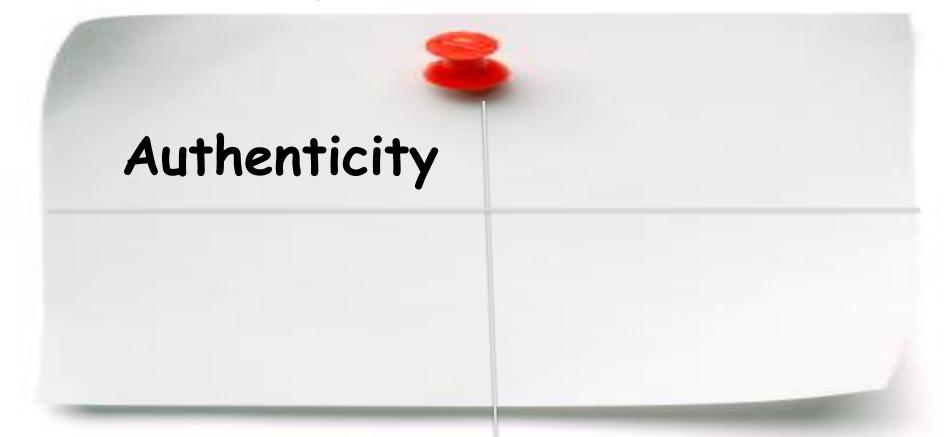
Where Trust Breaks Down

- Safety
- Honesty
- Compassionate Care
- Reliability
- Financial stability & security
- Sexual fidelity/ integrity

GPS to Healing Broken Trust

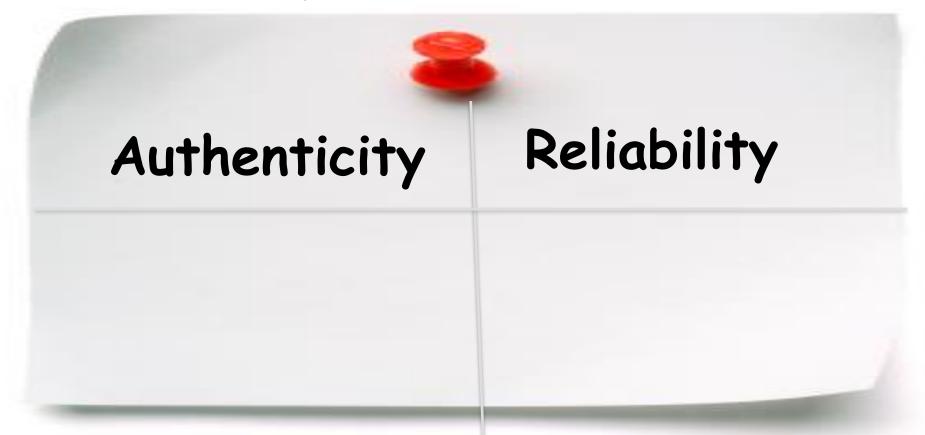


Four Quadrants of Trust





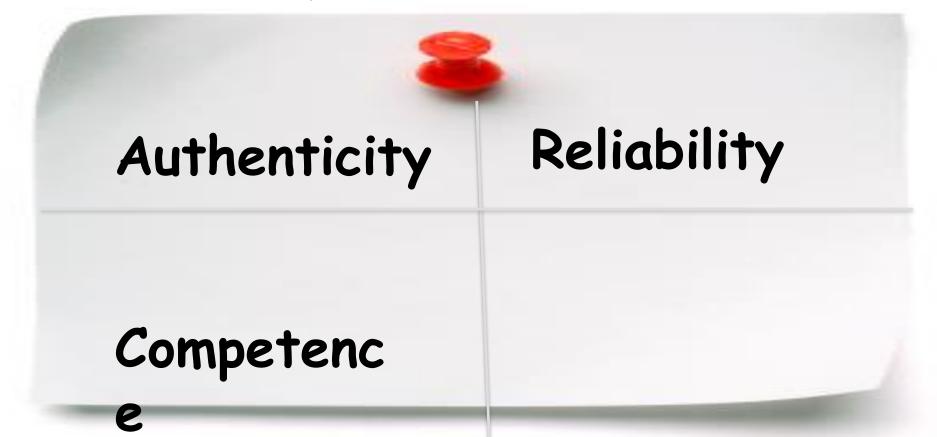
Four Quadrants of Trust



Can I count on you to do what you say you will do?



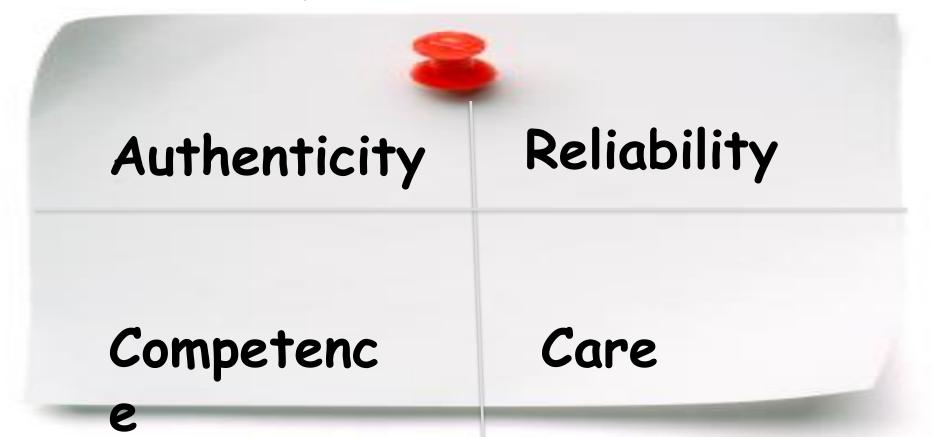
Four Quadrants of Trust



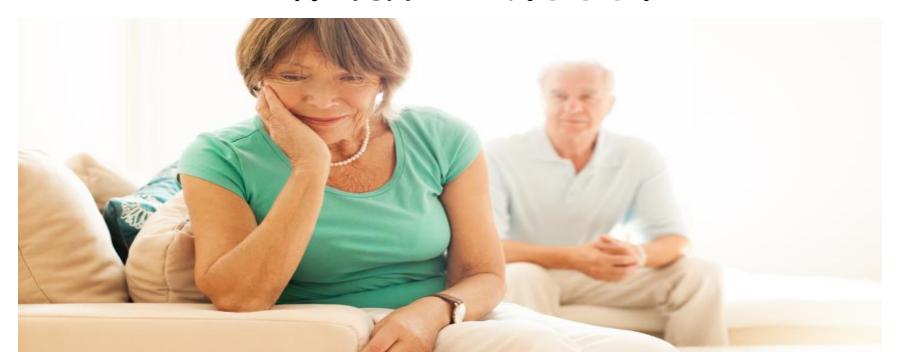
Can I count on you to get help or ask advice for something you don't know how to do?



Four Quadrants of Trust



Can I trust you to care what I think, how I feel or what or what I need?



For Her

Build new trust/ new history

Let go of resentment and fears

Walk in CORE strength

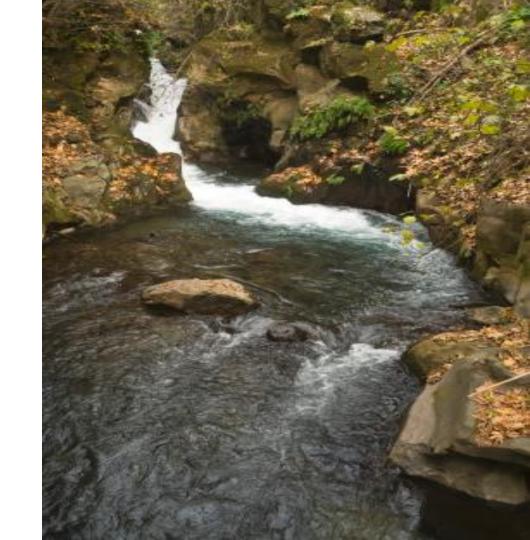
For Him

Continued accountability Confession and amends making Building new trust Developing compassion and empathy Ability to hear and respond to feedback with adjustments in behavior

Necessary Changes

Naaman's 7 dips of healing

2 Kings 5



1. Needs to learn how to submit to others instead of always demanding his own way.

1. He needs new skills in problem solving.

1. Needs to learn how to appropriately express feelings without abuse, manipulation or intimidation.

4. Needs to learn to allow his wife to be separate and disagree without labeling it as disrespectful, getting enraged, or feeling terrified of abandonment.

5. Needs to learn to how to speak directly about what he needs and to trust others to be there and care.

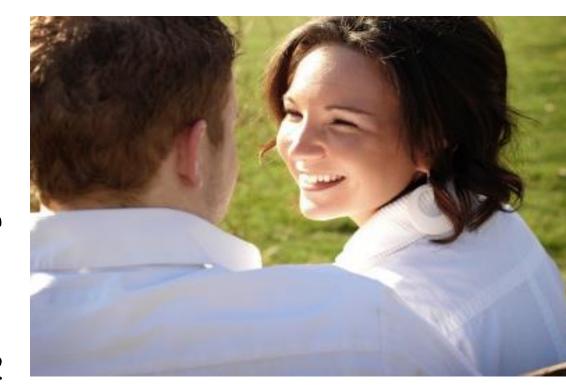
- 6. Needs to learn how to handle the hurt and disappointment that comes when people who care let us down.
- 7. Needs to take the initiative and responsibility to meet his own needs rather than demanding that his wife always do so.

Practice + Patience with the process = Healing



SECURITY

She (he) brings him (her) good not harm all the days of her life.

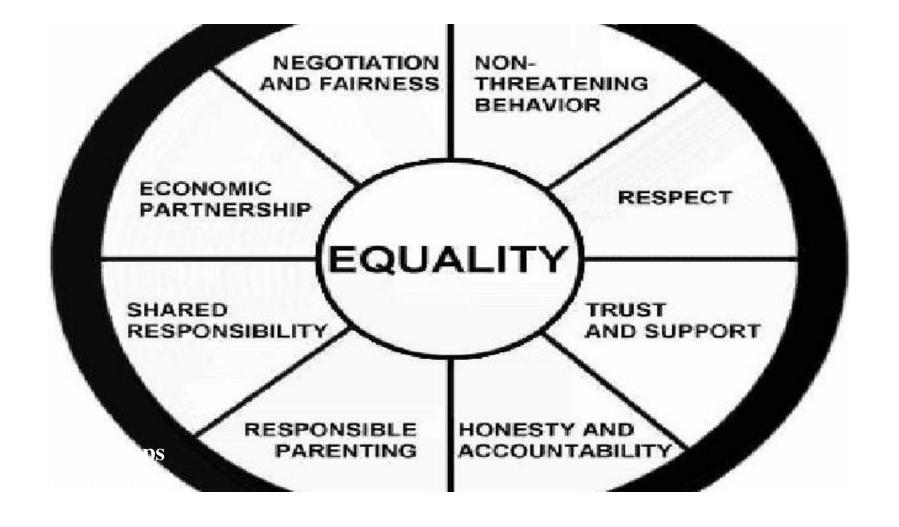


Proverbs 31:12



Goal: To deepen intimacy as trust is established. To work on problem solving skills, emotional intimacy and continued practice of new habits.





Three critical mistakes

1. Wrong diagnosis

- 2. Doing couple's counseling
- 3. Voiding God's
 Law of
 Consequences



All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men (and women) do nothing.

Edmund Burke

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil.

God will not hold us guiltless.

Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

Dietrich Bonheoffer

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE

BETTER EQUIPPED?

www.leslievernick/equipsignup