

Excerpted from ““Relationships: Individual and Collective Agents of Evolution?” by Russ Giles and Sheri Cooke at Community Days July 2018

So when things begin to spiral bad gently or kamikaze, in other words in any relationship when one partner feels attacked or is told by their partner that they are attacking. Or if you have finally got up the gumption to register a complaint about how you have been being treated (i.e. not seen and/or heard and/or appreciated) and you well prepared tactical conversation is about to crash n burn do the following:

1. **Pause and breathe:** break your current physical/emotional state to the degree possible.
2. **Pay attention** realizing that attention does cost - you got to tear it off of yourself and aim it at the other OR tear your judgmental focus off the other and aim it at yourself. Either way attention does cost and you do have to pay it.
3. **Strive for physical/frequency rapport.**
4. **Expect** that things will get **messy before** they get **better.**
5. A good way to get to better is to **ASK questions** (that are not masked attacks) and be careful with your words, cuz THE WORD actually started a universe. Questions are better than statements because they have different affects on human brains and therefore create different instant reactions and therefore far different responses.

6. If you find you are **stuck** in your own overwhelm or you fantasize that your partner is stuck, then **take a time out**. Physically change your posture. Signal: tell your partner what's happening to you (not them) and move away temporarily. Go somewhere else physically...not far far away (just outside or the next room will do, but definitely don't pout of fume in a proximity corner--that's an underhanded attack.) BTW, what you do in the time out is as important as the time out itself. It is not the opportunity to refine and re-energize your next counter-attack or bolster your defensive positions.

7. Be **willing to resolve** issues **by going into and through** them and after time you will come to appreciate just how courageous any human being is to even attempt to undo the faulty programming he/she has suffered at the hands of well-meaning (or not) parents, friends, teachers, TV, Youtube, Movies etc etc. That's a lot of sh-t to shovel through. And it's tiring cuz it's hard and the shovels are pretty flimsy at the start. That's what Sheri means by being comfortable with the discomfort.

8. A useful declaration to verbalize to yourself almost any time is "**I am here. I am here. I am always here.**" It is useful because it is the one unalterable, unchallengeable FACT in your experience. It cannot ever, ever be disproven. And a useful declaration of faith is: "**Love is all there is.**" Simply because, anything else leads to unbearable pain, suffering and ultimately oblivion.

9. Have the purpose of your relationship be understood as a mechanism for healing and transformation (a spiritual or life dharma) -- it is perfectly designed to bring up the hidden wounding, false and hurtful ego-beliefs that are heavily defended and reinforced, and unreal expectations or fantasies based on past or outside influences. The inbuilt, natural mechanism works first on each of you and

then through you, naturally extends to your community as your skills are generalized to all people.

10. Use relationship to shift from being potential enemies to being truly best, devoted partner-friends who are committed to mastering being a safe space for whatever needs to come up, to be expressed and explored together with as much genuine curiosity as possible, once the initial triggers are disarmed. You are gradually being led to the experience beyond the intellect of actually realizing you are the same person, or joined in essence and sacred purpose for the truth of who we are.