

Relationships in Recovery

Practicing the Principles in All Our Affairs

Why do many of us still yearn for more from our lives and our loves? Can we use the mechanism of “rigorous honesty” as a method for a fuller life and more meaningful relationships. The quality of our relationships is equal to the quality of our lives. Yet, many of us lack a direct method to improve the quality of our relationships.

Integrity - Authenticity

- With Self
- With Others
- In Agreements

Being able to see and
say the truth

Intuition

Vs

Rational Thought

Trust your Gut

or

Think it Through

Which is True?

How do you Know?

OLD Paradigm says Rational Thought Rules

Perception



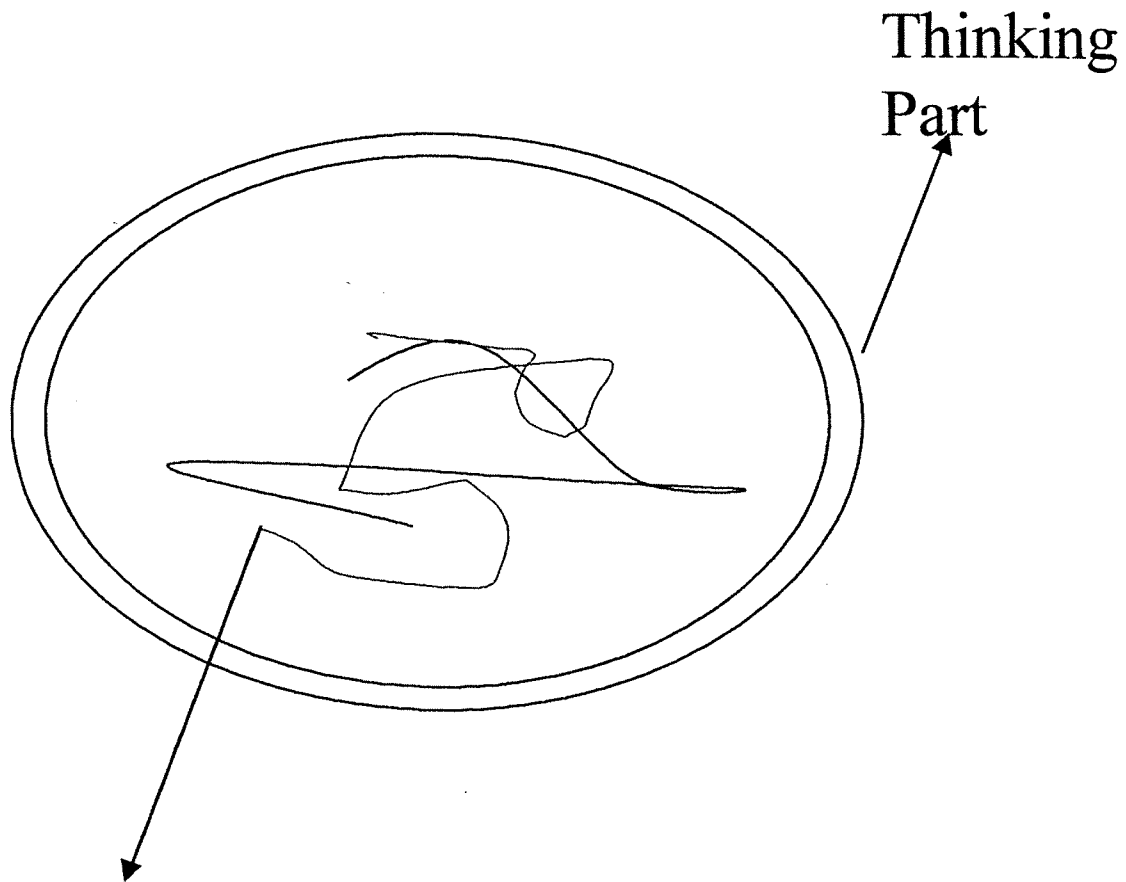
Thought



Feelings

King Thought controls the
Animal Body

You are a Grapefruit



Thinking
Part

Big Feelings
Part

You are more Limbic System than

Neural Network

.....More powerful emotion

and less computer

Why Breathing?

Feel Better
Live Longer

Not Breathing is Bad

Fight or Flight

Uncomfortable

Blocks Creativity

Stops Relationships

Why we don't Breathe

- Abs
- Learned responses
- FEAR
- Habit
- Lack of Training

Conscious Breathing is
the only way to know
the truth about how we
feel.

- Under stress
- When afraid
- In relationships

Baby Breathing

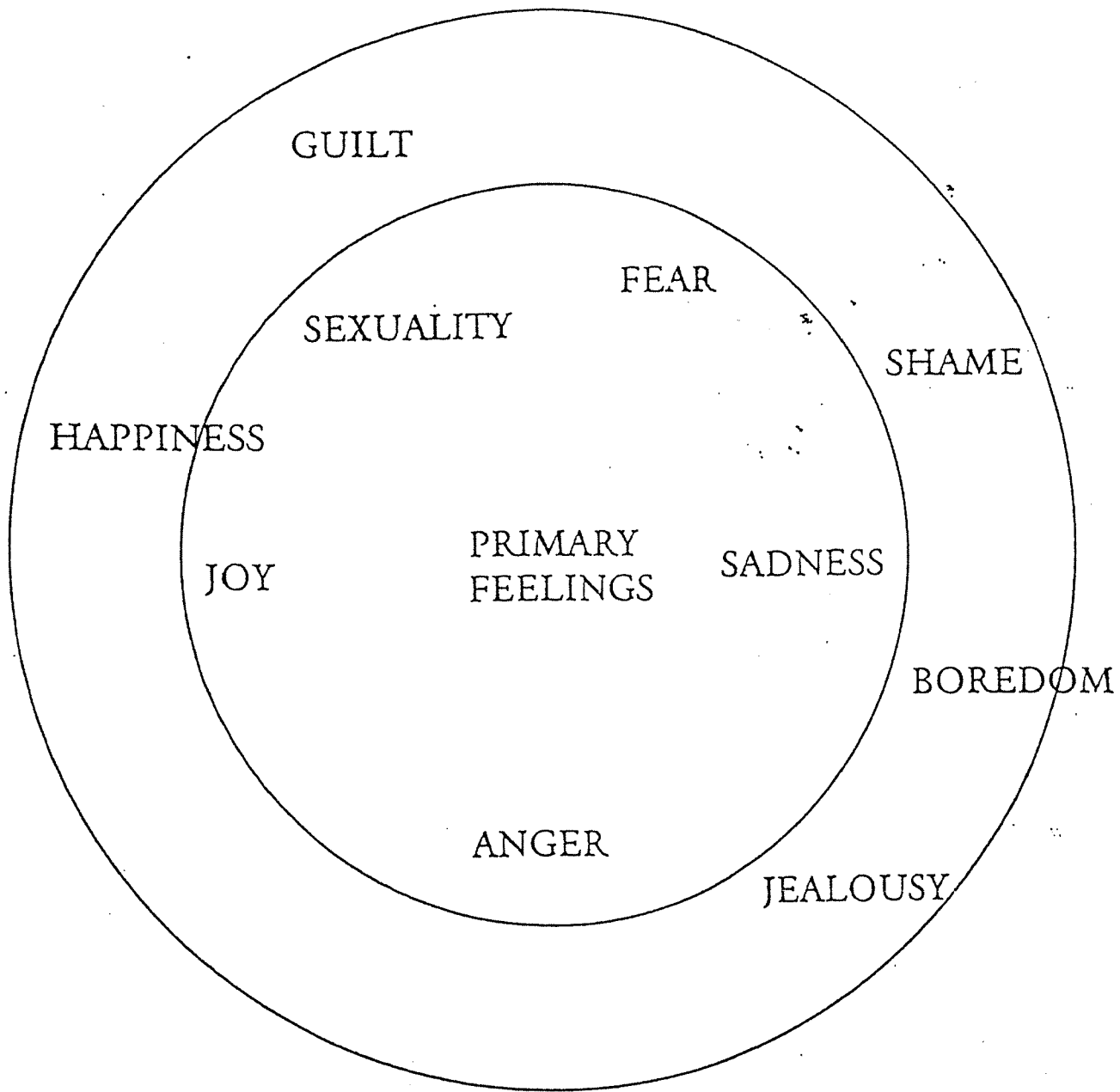
Sit comfortably upright. Gently arch & flatten the small of the back, rolling forward and back on the sit-bones. As you arch the back, look up toward the ceiling -- as you flatten the back look down toward the floor. Make the movement easeful and slow. Breathe deeply into your belly as you arch the small of your back -- breathe out fully as you flatten the small of your back.

“Feelings are what we
have the most of and
understand the least.
You either have your
feelings or they will
have you.

--Father Joseph Martin

PALETTE OF FEELINGS

SECONDARY FEELINGS



LEARNING TO SPEAK THE MICROSCOPIC TRUTH

The Truth: That Which Cannot Be Argued About

- The most important reason for telling the truth is that it creates more vitality, creativity and choices.
- The cash value of telling the truth is that it stops arguments.

People often go through three stages in learning to speak the truth in relationships:

Stage One = Non Truth

Popular subjects of relationship conversation before learning to speak the truth:

1. **Blame** – "Who's responsible for this mess?" "My life was great before you came along."
2. **Who Said What** – "I specifically remember that you said last Tuesday that you would call if you were going to be late." "No, I didn't. I said that...")
3. **Justifying and Being Right** – "Some of us might benefit from developing a little courtesy around here now and then. My first husband never left his shorts lying around the kitchen."
4. **Racing for the Victim Position** – "If you had spent the day taking care of three sick kids you would understand why I ate the whole box of chocolate cherries." "Hah, you've got it made just sitting home watching TV and eating chocolate. I had to put up with working eight hours to buy those chocolates."

Stage Two = Half Truth

1. **Vague Labels** – "I'm feeling okay." "I'm under a lot of pressure." "I'm stressed out."
2. **Explaining and Analyzing** – "I'm feeling kind of off because the atmospheric pressure is low and I slept wrong on my neck."
3. **Negatives** – "I'm not feeling bad, I'm not feeling good, I'm not feeling much of anything."

Stage Three = The Microscopic Truth

1. **Sensations** – "My neck is tight." "I feel a knot in my stomach and my palms are sweaty."
2. **Core Feelings** – "I'm scared" "I'm sad." "I'm angry." "I'm excited."
3. **Specific Thoughts/Imaginings/Interpretations** – "I just heard a raspy voice in my head telling me to shut up."
4. **Familiar Patterns and Experiences** – "This tight feeling in my belly is like how I felt at mealtimes as a kid."

EXAMPLE OF CONTRAST BETWEEN STAGE ONE AND STAGE THREE:

"You never listen to me." **-or-**
"I can feel my stomach getting tight as we talk."

Examples of Listening Filters

Listening to :

Fix

Control

Confirm point of view

Hear whether I'm liked

Make a run for the victim position

Approval

Avoid being dominated

Avoid conflict

Be right

LISTENING FILTERS

WE GET

What is, or,

What he/she is saying

CONFUSED WITH

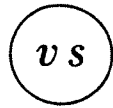
What we think and feel about what is, or,

What we think and feel about what he/she is saying



MY MOST FAMILIAR LISTENING FILTERS ARE:

BLAME
TALK



CONSCIOUS HEART
TALK

You're not listening to me.

*You're not understanding
what I'm saying.*

*You don't do what you say
you're going to do.*

*I'm mad at you for leaving
the toilet seat up/down...
the toothpaste cap off...
your clothes all over the floor.*

Why are they doing this to me?

Why did s/he leave me?

*How could he or she have
treated me like that?*

*Why were you flirting all night
at the party?*

*You never talk to me about
your feelings.*

You're spending too much money.

*You never touch me unless
you want sex.*

*I'm not communicating what
I'm trying to say effectively.*

*I'm not communicating
clearly.*

*I want to find out how we can keep
our agreements with each other.*

*I'm mad and what I'm focusing my
anger on is these piles of clothes. It
may be about something else I don't
know about yet.*

*How am I setting it up so this
is happening?*

What do I need to learn from this?

*I got scared when I saw you
talking in the corner.*

*I must be withholding some feelings
from you. I notice I'm focusing on
your withholding.*

*I'm feeling scared looking at these
bills. I'm wondering how to generate
enough money to pay for the things
we buy.*

*I'm feeling hungry for more touch.
I want to find a way for us to have
more non-sexual touch.*

WHOLE BODY LISTENING

The challenge is to grow in our ability to recognize our automatic listenings. We are not trying to rid ourselves of automatic listenings, they are a natural part of the human condition. When we realize we are listening through a filter or an automatic pattern, we then have the opportunity to choose to listen more consciously.

CONSCIOUS LISTENING SKILLS

PAY ATTENTION

To pay attention is essential to listening consciously. It means stop talking, stop your other activities, stay focused on what the speaker is saying. Be aware of both their verbal and non-verbal communication. This requires you to stay out of your internal dialogue. You will need to catch yourself getting distracted and return to paying attention. It is appropriate to acknowledge that you were distracted. It is important to indicate verbally and non-verbally to the speaker that you are receiving their communication.

LEVEL ONE: LISTENING FOR ACCURACY

Listen for the meaning in what the speaker is saying. Regularly paraphrase back to the speaker what you hear them say for confirmation or clarification. Replicate

what you hear regularly and ask for confirmation or clarification of your accuracy.

LEVEL TWO: LISTENING FOR EMPATHY

Listen under the words to appreciate the speakers' point of view. Appreciate the speakers' feeling and recognize their conscious commitment. You are striving to experience and see the world from the speaker's perspective. It is useful to verbally recreate the speaker's feelings and commitment. Avoid assuming that you know the speaker's perspective before they confirm your accuracy.

LEVEL THREE: LISTENING FOR MUTUAL CREATIVITY

Once you have successfully replicated and recreated what the speaker is saying, you can stand with the speaker in their reality.

Then you both begin to invent a new way of relating to or viewing the situation, problem or person, that is forward-looking and provides more compelling openings for action.

EXAMPLES OF SHIFTS TO CONSCIOUS LISTENING

Automatic Listening To Conscious Listening

| | |
|--|--|
| Listening for agreement | <i>Listening for possibility</i> |
| Listening to win | <i>Listening to forward the action</i> |
| Listening to oppose you | <i>Listening for your commitment</i> |
| Listening for confirmation of your point of view | <i>Listening with curiosity</i> |
| Listening for who's right | <i>Listening for the most forwarding interpretation</i> |
| Listening to fix | <i>Listening to understand and appreciate/Listening with empathy</i> |

FEELINGS INQUIRY EXERCISE

Instructions:

Decide who will be Partner A and who will be Partner B. Partner A will be the creator and Partner B the responder. Partner A will enact the following list of feelings and Partner B will share his/her response to each item out loud. Partner A, do your best to use your whole body and voice to make each feeling larger than life. Exaggerations can often bring hidden responses out of the shadows. Take a couple of deep, relaxed breaths after each feeling and shake it off before moving on to the next. Partner B tune in to your truthful response to each feeling and share that out loud before Partner A moves on to the next feeling.



Partner A, take a few minutes to let yourself look and sound

- * Sad and Partner B, tell the truth about your response.
- * Fearful..... Remain looking fearful while Partner B shares.
- * Annoyed..... Do your best to hold an annoyed posture until Partner B shares
- * Really Happy.... Partner B, you may be surprised at your response to this feeling.
- * Enraged..... Hold your most extreme posture while Partner B tunes in and speaks.
- * Ashamed..... Remember a shameful incident and hold that feeling until B is through.
- * Sexy..... Think of something sexy and do your best to show sexiness.
- * Serene..... Recall a harmonious event and exaggerate the feeling.

When Partner A has gone through the whole list and Partner B has had a chance to respond fully to each feeling, switch roles. When you have each enacted and responded to the list of feelings, take some time to discuss your responses with each other before we discuss as a group.

Think about these questions:

1. What feelings were most difficult to respond to and which were easiest?
2. Did you recognize the feelings that get muddy between you and your partner, the ones that you project most often?

For example: Pam has noticed that when Steve looked angry she would assume she had done something wrong. Most of her attention then went into a fixing mode, things she could do to soothe Steve's anger. After practicing this activity for a while she was able to ask, "Are you angry?" Asking simple questions interrupted the assuaging pattern and gave Steve a chance to reflect on his actual feeling in the moment.

Personas

- What are they?
- Where do they come from?
- How does that effect me?
- What do I do about it?