

an unconscious reaction, but
yourself: "OK, they are still

do next. You can retreat
your partner is trying to break
return to the conversation

partner some space to relearn
awareness with humor to the
m and say, "Hey, remember,
use together and then talk!"
other and make fun agree-
ets heated you both have to
you talk. Or the person who
sometimes silliness is the anti-
nt communication. Breaking
rent can work wonders.

clear in this example is that
g through with their own
scious energy. When some-
o blame and judgment and
clear again about what you
eed is vital.

ave the room and wait until
nce to stay grounded, and I
d." Can you say this with
en heart? If your heart is
or yourself. Try speaking
change happens. At first it
blem. But if you stay clear
rough, a shift will occur.

The Heart-Throat Connection

Coming from your heart is vital when learning to speak your truth. If we don't really mean what we say, it won't matter how well we say it; the people we are speaking to will feel the lack of sincerity behind the words. It is powerful to dedicate yourself to speaking your truth with your heart open, even if that truth is difficult, rather than trying to be gentle or appropriate and speak with your heart closed.

One way we close our heart and throat is when we believe we are doing something wrong. So, again, looking deeply into our unconscious beliefs is crucial. Is it OK for you to say no? Is it OK for you to make boundaries? Is it OK for you to say things others may not want to hear? Can you speak without taking responsibility for others' reactions? And can you do all of these things with your heart wide open? This takes practice. Speaking your truth is often not something we are supported to do, but it is a skill we can learn to do gracefully.

If you fail to speak your truth, your internal energy will then either build up and eventually explode in an emotional outburst, or your energetic flow will be cut off and you will feel like your access to pure life-force energy has dried up, leaving you feeling lethargic and without passion, timidly saying what you think others want to hear and needing others as a source of energy and direction. When you deny your own voice, this feeds your judge or victim voices, rather than your authenticity, and the result is anger at yourself or others.

Finding Your Authentic Voice

Two very helpful tools when working on finding your authentic voice are backtracking and replaying.

Backtracking

Backtracking means you make an internal commitment to speaking your truth in the moment, and if you do not, you go back to the person, admit you did not speak your truth, and try again. You may have to backtrack over and over again until you get it right.

Here is an example. A friend asks you, "Do you want to go to a movie with me tomorrow night?" And you automatically say yes. But after you get off the phone you realize you really want to stay home and read a book. So instead of going to the movie, you call back and say, "I realized after I got off the phone that I do not want to go to a movie tomorrow, I need to rest. Can we go to the movie next week?" You do not need to explain yourself or apologize profusely; simply state what you need. Watch out for defending yourself.

The great thing about committing to this practice is that after we backtrack a few times we learn really quickly to speak honestly in the moment.

Replaying

With replaying, you consciously replay conversations from your past when you didn't speak your truth, but this time, you imagine yourself speaking your truth. There are probably plenty of situations you can think of where you realize that you did not speak your truth in the moment. What would speaking your truth have looked like? Replay the situation using your authentic voice. What would you have said differently, and how would it have potentially changed the outcome?

I was once in a relationship with a man who felt threatened by the way I was dressing and being in the world. We had long, teary talks about my not being overtly sexual. He was in a place of wanting to have a stable, monogamous relationship.

At the time I was just beginning to explore my sexuality, and if I had been honest with myself and with him I would have said, "Sweetie, I care a lot about you and really want to be in a relationship with you, but right now I need to play and flirt and explore being sexy." He may have said, "OK, I can hold with that as long as we keep these agreements," and we may have negotiated, or he may have said, "I cannot do that." Instead, we spent three tumultuous years in a relationship where I repressed my sexual energy (you can imagine what that did for our sex life!) and he felt cut off.

We were in different places in our needs, but both of us ignored the truth of this. Looking back, I see how powerful it would have been to speak my truth and not be ashamed of it or cling to being in a relationship with him in the way he wanted to be in a relationship.

It is a gift to yourself and others when you are truly, openheartedly honest. This starts with speaking the truth to yourself first, over and over and over again. In doing so you will gain self-intimacy and trust, which will naturally spill over into all of your relationships.

Lesson Eight Resources

Gifts

- Clear communication often means unlearning bad habits, and sometimes we need to go back to "first grade" basics.
- Speaking our truth is often as uncomfortable as it is empowering.
- Learn to communicate in whole messages to increase intimacy and connection.

- An open heart is a powerful ally, even when we are making boundaries or sharing difficult information.

Explorations

Finding Your Truth

To learn more about your own truth in communicating, write down everything you believe about how you should communicate in the world. Write without thinking. Read the list over and notice which agreements/thoughts are about getting a desired result/reaction from the person you are talking to, and which stem from your authentic expression.

Vent, Advice, Share

My friend and I play a simple game that helps us stay present with each other. If one of us needs to vent and express our frustration after a hard day, we say, "Vent!" The other person can say, "Give it to me!" One person takes five minutes to vent as fully and dramatically as possible, and once those five minutes are up you stop and move on. We can also say, "Not now!" which means "I don't have the space for your vent right now."

If we need advice, we say, "Advice!" so that the other knows to get their creative brain in gear.

And if we say "Share!" that means "I'm really excited about something—cheerlead and celebrate with me!"

What games could you create with friends, family, or partners?

LESSON

Embody Your

*The intuitive
rational mind
have created
servant and*

I was running late for an appointment to visit my neighbor. My urge to get going, there is no reason deeper in my being kept saying, "He is doing." After I argued with him to follow the pull to see my neighbor's dirt path and through the oak trees. I was going to be a little bit late.

Fred had been going through hard times: the end of his marriage, the loss of the home he loved, his young son. When he walked up he looked up from the ground.

"What are you doing here?"

"I just felt the urge to come down into a chair. "How are you