

ASSERTIVE AND CONNECTING COMMUNICATION

# UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY

UNDERSTAND HOW TO CONNECT AND RESPECT EACH OTHER

Notice how trying to get others to understand **why** you feel the way you do, or want or need what you want or need, pulls you into complaining, defending, explaining (power-under/victim role) and conflict. Learn to communicate in a way for others to understand **how** you can get your genuine wants and needs met.



This communication skill also involves Curious Listening and working together (with your partner, family, friends, coworkers, etc.) to understand **how** you can meet each others' needs, wants and respect boundaries. This is connecting, assertive, caring, and mutually empowering.



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**Expecting yourself to fully understand *why* another is feeling the way they do is impossible. What matters is understanding *how* we can provide comfort, help, guidance, etc., whatever is specifically needed from each other.**

# UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY *staying out of triangle*



"You hurt my feelings."

## TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHY

I'm so sorry. Why!? What did I do? (RESCUING)

It's the way you looked at me. Then you said something about my shirt, and yesterday you mentioned something about how the laundry wasn't folded.

>> See how this brought both people in the Drama Triangle blaming and explaining

## UNDERSTAND HOW

Help me understand what you need from me or how you can feel better.

It's the way you looked at me. You look disgusted in me.

Ok, I appreciate you being honest. Let's talk more so I can understand how I can make sure you're feeling loved. You're so important to me.

>> See how this provides opportunity to connect outside of the Drama Triangle

# UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY *staying out of triangle*



"I can't believe you're late again. I'm so mad!"

## TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHY

This is ridiculous! Why would being two minutes late make you mad?  
(POWER-OVER/CRITIC)

Because it happens over and over. You keep saying you'll be on time, but it hasn't happened once. You must not care about me at all.

>> See how this brought both people in the Drama Triangle blaming and explaining

## UNDERSTAND HOW

This is the soonest I can be here since I leave work at 5pm. How can we get a better plan?

A better plan? What do you mean? I need you to be here exactly on time.

Help me understand how I can get here then when I leave my office at 5.

I guess I need to be ok with you being a little late. I get it now.

>> See how this provides opportunity to connect outside of the Drama Triangle



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**Sometimes we  
don't know what  
we want or need!  
Talking it through  
with others can  
bring us clarity in  
what's needed to  
feel better, both  
now in the present  
and long-term.**