

THE INTERPERSONAL DANCE

The Dancers – People Relating

A Relationship: Link, bond, connection, nearness, hookup, alliance, affinity, accord, influence-related...

Relationship States (Ways of Being):

- **Togetherness – The State of “We” and “Us” in the Relationship**
 - *Positive Togetherness* - (Positively charged Relationship)
Through the process of “attending and attuning” to each other, people become affirming, energized, and productive for self and the other.
 - *Negative Togetherness* - (Negatively charged Relationship)
Partners are involved in stances of tension, bickering, fighting, arguing, cold silences. If much time is spent in this state, the relationship becomes draining and non-productive. People wonder if it is worth it.
- **Separateness - The State of “I” and “You” in the Relationship**
 - *Positive Separateness* – People focus their energies and interests away from each other on different activities, people, or things and the other gives support and encouragement. They are comfortable with their separateness and not threatened.
 - *Negative Separateness* – So much time, energy, and interest is spent away from the relationship that even when together, partners are too exhausted, or unwilling to tune in to each other. Too much negative separateness “unravels” the relationship just as too much togetherness can stifle it.

Transition States That Lead to (+) or (-) Togetherness/Separateness

I

- **In all relationships, partners try to influence each other and lead the other in a new direction.**
 - *Leading/Following* - If one partner takes a step in a new direction there is risk, for the other partner can decide to accept or reject the move. When the 2nd partner follows, or at least shows interest, gives support and encouragement, a positive experience usually results for both.
 - *Pulling/Dragging* - Often the 1st partner pulls too hard (moves towards change without clear negotiation) becoming anxious about the 2nd partner’s hesitations or doubts. This doubles the 2nd partner’s resistance (often due to feeling left out or disconnected). Negative Togetherness or Separateness develops.
- **In all relationships, there are times when one partner gives the other a directive.**
 - *Directing/Complying* – If the directive is given in considerate and polite tones, the 2nd partner experiences respect and may comply readily knowing everyone will benefit. The relationship stays in harmony.
 - *Pushing/Blocking* – Either from habit or because the 2nd partner balked at the directive, the directive escalates to an order, demand, or threat (giving a verbal shove). Resistance increases and a full-fledged argument results. The partners find themselves in Negative Togetherness in an open power struggle or Negative Separateness in distancing behaviors.

Taken from *Connecting With Self and Others* by Sherod Miller

STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

Small Talk

- Intention to be: Friendly, relaxed, playful.
- Intention to: Build rapport, keep in touch.

Shop Talk

- Intention to be: Competent, informed, productive, cooperative
- Intention to: Gather & give information, monitor activities and schedules

Control Talk

- Intention to be: In charge, helpful, persuasive
- Intention to: Lead, direct, persuade, instruct, set expectations, gain agreement/compliance

Fight Talk

- Intention to be: Right, justified, aggressive, sometimes hurtful
- Intention to: Win, force change, defend self, avoid responsibility, hide fear or vulnerability, intimidate, bluff, cover hurt, get even, make other person feel guilty.

Straight Talk

- Intention to be: Open, aware, direct, responsible, honest, assertive, tactful, respectful, and responsive
- Intention to: Disclose, attune, care, collaborate, “act on what is”, count self, respect, learn, connect

Communicating with Boundaries

My Superficial Self: I share my surface personality, some of my thoughts, ideas and values, No real personal risk is involved. (A salesperson at the store)

My Selective Self: I share more of my closely held opinions, values, and some of my needs and emotions, but I choose to keep personal risk at a minimum. (A solid work relationship, some of my friends)

My Innermost Self: I disclose my true thoughts and beliefs, my deepest feelings, and needs, my closely held values, my honest walk with God. There is a bond of trust already built in the relationship. (A proven faithful friend, spouse, parent, sibling whom I know will honor my vulnerability and confidentiality)