



Affective Center for Therapy

2560 W. Shaw Suite #105 Fresno, CA 93711

(559) 436-0428 FAX: (559) 436-0438

www.ACT-Fresno.com

HOW TO NEVER LOSE ANOTHER FIGHT

No one likes to lose a fight. To keep from losing, some people will resort to lying, cheating, name calling, bullying, controlling, and threatening. It is said of Samuel Johnson that, if he could not win an argument by shooting a hole in it, he would beat you over the head with the butt end of his pistol. In the 1960's, Khrushchev used his shoe to pound on the podium and yelled at the UN as (perhaps) a demonstration of, "point weak, raise voice and pound podium."

Other people try to avoid conflict as a way of not losing. These "peace at any price" people end up stuffing their feelings of anger and can become depressed or they become passive aggressive. Their mantra is, "I don't get angry, I get even." What is your way of dealing with conflict?

Most people look at arguments in win/lose terms. The problem with this approach in relationships is that when you win, you lose. The writer Hemingway said it this way, "Winner take nothing."

There is another way. Not winning does not automatically mean losing! IF you are willing to share your feelings, you will never lose another fight.

When you listen to the TV and radio, you will see the problem. Most people do not recognize the difference between judgments and feelings. On the Sunday talking heads, you hear the questions:

- "How do you feel about abortion?"
- "How do you feel about gun control?"
- "How do you feel about the economy?"
- "How do you feel about the President?"

Feeling questions will be asked, but then a debate follows because the feeling questions were answered with judgments, not feelings.

Judgments are debatable, feelings are not!

What stops people from answering a feeling question with a feeling and what stops people from sharing their feelings? The reason most people refuse to respond with their feelings is because the person asking

the question really is not interested in what they feel, or because they are afraid of what they are going to hear back if they share their feelings.

For instance, what are you afraid you are going to hear if you say to your mate, "I do not feel loved?" There are two possibilities:

1) "You're right, I don't love you. I have been using you all these years." That is the response that you are most afraid to hear, but logically, you know it is the response which you are least likely hear. However, if you had to hear this response, would you rather hear it now or wait 10 more years and then hear it?

2) What you are more likely to hear is, "That is stupid. You should not feel that way. Of course I love you; didn't I kiss you last year?" With this response, you are likely to feel very small and putdown. Who wants to take that risk? The fear is, if I tell you who I am (my feelings) you may not like who I am, and it is all that I have.

So, how do you respond to such a statement?

Do you have a button that you can push and not feel what you are feeling? You also may not like what you are feeling, but can you throw a switch and not feel what you are feeling? Feelings are not good or bad, they just are.

Who knows what you feel other than you? So, if you share your feelings, how can anybody dispute them? What I feel is what I feel. Whether you like them or not or whether I like them or not, they are what I am feeling.

Here is a way to respond; my two favorite words in response to discounting feeling statements are, 1) Never-the-less, and 2) regardless. For example you say:

"I don't feel loved."

"That is stupid. You shouldn't feel that way. You know I love you."

"Never-the-less, that is what I feel."

"You are so lame. You know better than that. Of course I love you."

"Regardless, you may love me very much, but I am not feeling very loved. I wish I had a button I could push and not feel this way. Honey, you can keep telling me to change something I cannot change, or you could help me look for ways that make me feel loved."

If you hold your ground, this fight is going nowhere. Remember, judgments are debatable, feelings are not.

Do you understand the difference between judgments and feelings? OK, then let me shift for a moment. Have you noticed some of the things that you get into fights over can be devastating? Sometimes they can escalate until you are ready for a divorce. Let's look at some examples.

- ✓ And, how do you feel about abortion? Give me two words.
- ✓ How do you feel about the drone strikes? Give me two words.
- ✓ How do you feel about you and your mate becoming swingers? Give me two words.
- ✓ How do you feel about all the gun violence in Chicago? Give me two words.
- ✓ How do you feel about you and your mate taking separate vacations every year? Give me two words.

What kind of words did you give me? Were they feeling words or were they judgments? "It's a sin." "It's bad." "It is immoral." "It's not good." "It is destructive." "It's just wrong."

And, you said you understood the difference between judgments and feelings!

Try it again, this time give me feeling words: Afraid, Angry, Sad, Depressed, Happy, etc. If you are having trouble coming up with feeling words, see the Feeling Words list on the next page. This is just a short list of feeling words. If none of these words fit what you are feeling, you might find others words that better suits your emotional state, such as indifferent, confused, etc. Now, tell me how you feel.

- ✓ How do you feel about the Democrats?
- ✓ How do you feel about the Republicans?
- ✓ How do you feel about prostitution?

"Well, you shouldn't feel that way!"

And, this time your response is?

Never-the-less. . .

Sharing your feelings does not have to be hard or scary if you know a few communication rules and techniques.

Doc Downing PhD, LMFT

DocDowning@att.net

ACT-Fresno@att.net

CATEGORIES OF FEELINGS

LEVELS OF INTENSITY	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	AFRAID	DEPRESSED
STRONG	Ecstatic	Heartbroken	Rage	Terrified	Despondent
	Excited	Sorrowful	Hate	Frightened	Miserable
	Overjoyed	Mournful	Furious	Panicked	Despair
	Jubilant	Gloomy	Enraged	Scared	Defeated
	Hilarious	Weepy	Irrate	Threatened	Blum
MILD	Merry	Woeful	Fuming	Alarmed	Disheartened
	Glad	Cheerless	Mad	Fearful	Melancholy
	Cheerful	Miserable	Disgusted	Anxious	Unhappy
	Optimistic	Abandoned	Pissed Off	Insecure	In the Dumps
	Pleased	Isolated	Frustrated	Fearful	Flat
WEAK	Lighthearted	Lonely	Bitter	Started	Blah
	Serene	Alone	Irritated	Shaky	Somber
	Satisfied	Lost	Annoyed	Timid	Dull
	Peaceful	Blue	Upset	Shy	Complacent



Affective Center for Therapy

2560 W. Shaw, Suite 105, Fresno, CA 93711 559.436-0428 Fax: 559.436-0438

Doc@ACTnowFresno.org www.MyronDocDowning.info