

The Couples Cure

Miraculous Recovery for Couples on the Brink

Phase 1: Getting Real With Yourself (Turning Inward)

The Feedback Wheel

We're gonna tackle the feedback wheel. I know I mentioned this in the training on Pattern Interrupt. This is a really big part of being able to table the hot button issues or if something really time-sensitive comes up or something that's really pressing that needs to be handled, that you can use the feedback wheel structure to shore up any possibility that things could go off the rails. That's what's really important in pattern interrupt. Most people, at this stage in the game, they're not communicating in a way that's constructive. This feedback wheel is basically a tool that you can use. I'm excited to share all about this with you because I have found it to be the single best most bang for your buck tool that there is. If I could only teach one thing, it would be this. What I'm going to do today is I'm going to just kind of go over what it is essential and why it works. Then I'm going to share with you the structure. There's a four-point structure. I'm going to go into each part of that four-point structure with you in detail. Then I'm going to give you some guidelines to keep in mind, a couple of examples so that you can really see what that looks like in practice. I will go over some of the common pitfalls to be aware of, the common mistakes that I see people making when they put this into practice. Then, there will be some tools that you can use to supplement this learning. There will be an emotions wheel, there will be a PDF of the structure, a cheat sheet and a worksheet that you can use anytime you want to use it. With that, let's go ahead and get started.

First of all the feedback wheel essentially is a structure of communication that stops you from going back into old patterns. It's a container that keeps you safe. It's basically, put simply, it's:

1. A way to share concerns in a non-blaming way.

A way to share concerns in a non-blaming way. That's important. A lot of people are like, "How do I bring things up without criticizing or complaining?" "How do I bring things up or make a request in a way that doesn't sound controlling?" If you follow this structure, you won't have to worry about that at all.

2. Four-point structure that can be used for ALL communication

It's a four four-point structure like I mentioned, that can be used for all communication. This is something that I recommend really guiding all of your communication with your kids, with your friends. It's just incredibly useful. You can even use it just with yourself to clarify and get self-aware even when you're not going to share.

3. Template for your own self-awareness

That's what I was just basically saying, in terms of it's a template for your own self-awareness. It's something that you can use when you're journaling or processing stuff that's coming up for you to be able to dissect it for yourself and gain a greater understanding of: *What is coming up for me? What meaning am I giving this? What am I feeling? What do I need right now?* It's a really powerful tool.

WHY IT WORKS

1. Allows you to be truthful without overstepping

The reason why it works is that really allows you to be truthful, authentic and honest without overstepping. You never have to worry if you're doing it right. You're automatically in your lane.

2. Greatly increases your partner's ability to hear you

It greatly increases your partner's ability to hear you, which is one of the best outcomes for this tool. A lot of times when we bring something up and we give feedback, it will sound like a complaint or criticism. We use You-statements a lot. We point the

finger a lot, even when we're not trying to do that. Even when we're just coming from a loving place and trying to give constructive criticism, it's a slippery slope. Let's put it that way. If you use the feedback wheel, you will exponentially increase your chances of being heard.

3. Clears resentment quickly

It also clears resentment extremely quickly. It takes five to ten minutes to be able to just clear the air. Maybe even just five minutes when you get really good at it. It's something that you can use anytime. It's really quick. Once the both of you understand the structure, it's just like opening the window and getting some fresh air in your relationship. It's something that you can do to kind of maintain good feelings when things pop up as a way of not letting things build and build and build until they explode.

4. Ensures that communication is constructive

Also, it ensures that communication is constructive. You're not just bringing up the things that bother you but you actually have something in place that will allow you to do something different going forward.

5. Creates a safe and loving container

It creates a safe and loving container, like I mentioned before. Everybody knows their role in the conversation. There's no blame really. Each person can feel heard in this setup.

6. Radically increases your own self-awareness

It radically increases your own self-awareness, like I mentioned before. If you're going to have to give feedback and you use this structure, it forces you to really separate things out for yourself. I'll go into that in detail in just a minute.

7. Delineates clear boundaries (reduces co-dependency)

One of the best things about this tool is that when you do this right, it really delineates clear boundaries between you and your spouse. It reduces codependency because the way that it works is that when you're giving feedback, you're sharing about yourself. You're not making it so much about the other person. So it's very clear like, whose issue it is, whose story is it, whose feelings are at stake here. It's very clear what's going on. You can hear it without feeling like this is about you. If you're the recipient of it, you'll be able to take the feedback without feeling like you have to defend yourself. You see, "this isn't my stuff. This is their stuff, but I'm just a caring person. I'm their partner and I want to hear it because I want to know them and this is emotional intimacy." When you have that clear line, it allows you to be a lot more generous, as we're going to be talking about in the boundaries lesson.

4 POINT STRUCTURE

The four-point structure, I'm going to dive into this and go through each part. But just an overview, the four points are:

1. What happened/Trigger

What is the thing that's bothering you? What occurred that you need to give feedback on?

2. The story/meaning you gave it

What is the meaning that you give that? What is the story? What is the interpretation?

3. How you FELT

How did you feel? How do you feel about that? This is the emotions part.

4. What you need

What do you need? That's the request.

It looks deceptively simple. It's very nice to have this simple outline. It will anchor you if you start to feel a little bit muddy, you come back to this and it will ground you. You'll be able to see very clearly which things go under which category. But that's the four-point structure. Let's get into the first thing first.

What Happened/Trigger

1. Facts only (what can be recorded)

When you talk about the trigger, you have to make sure that you're dealing with facts only - what could be recorded on a video camera, what is it that you're seeing and hearing. I know that this is such a difficult thing to do for most people. We're always interpreting and sometimes, we don't even notice that we're doing it.

2. Stick to one thing (no patterns)

You also want to stick to one thing at a time. You don't bring up a pattern. You don't bring up something that happens all the time. You don't bring up a laundry list. These two things are going to make it so much more manageable and easy to hear. There's not going to be any arguing about what happened right. The goal is that this is not something that your spouse can argue with. You want to remove any interpretation whatsoever.

- Wrong way: When I saw you ignoring me

For example: The wrong way to do this would be to say, "When I saw that you were ignoring me, the meaning that I gave that..." No, this is an interpretation. If you were to record that, one person might see that and think, "Oh! That person is busy." Another person might think that person is sad. Another person might say that person is looking at their phone. But you might be thinking they were ignoring you. See what I'm saying? You just want to stick to the fact.

- Right way: When I saw you looking at your phone

The right way would be, "When I saw you looking at your phone...", "When I saw your head was down and your phone was in your lap and your thumb was scrolling..." Something really really clear that cannot be disputed. That's the first thing with the triggers.

Meaning you made

1. This is EVERYTHING

Then you can get into the meaning that you make. This really is everything. This is the thing that separates the people who are successful in transforming their lives from the people that stay stuck is the ability and capacity to recognize the meaning that you're making out of something. The reason why this is so important is because most people, most of us, lump in meaning with feelings. You might have already heard of the I-statement, this is a modified I-statement. The difference is that we're separating the meaning from the feeling. Most people lump that in together and will say, "Well, I just feel like you're not putting me first." That's not a feeling. That's an interpretation. The capacity to be able to separate that out is going to be crucial in this program. I will be asking you a lot on the coaching calls and our one-on-ones, *what does that mean to you? What is the meaning that that has for you?* You're going to get really good at this.

2. The meaning we make=the way we feel

The reason why that's so important is because the meaning that we make directly impacts how we feel. Sometimes we think that it's the trigger that make us feel a certain way. It's the actions of another that makes us feel a certain way. But it's the meaning that we give that makes us feel that way. That's an important thing to not overlook.

3. This allows you to observe your interpretations, which is a form of detachment from them.

Also what's so profound about this is being able to articulate the meaning that you're giving something allows you to observe your interpretations, which is a form of detachment from those reactions. Just in the act of observing your interpretations, observing how your mind made meaning out of that, separates you from it. You have more power over it. If you're in it and you're so strongly identified with it as objective truth and there's no capacity to look at it from the higher part of your mind, your higher self observing what's happening inside of you, then it's going to rule you. It's going to take over you. It has power over you. It's in the act of observation that we are able to externalize our experience and therefore have power over that experience to change it, to change the meaning, to pause before reacting. This is where all your power comes.

How you feel

1. Emotions Only (anger, fear, pain, joy, passion, love shame, guilt)

Once you've been able to identify the meaning that you gave something or the story that you tell yourself about what just

happened, then you can move into your emotions. For this part, you really want to keep it clean. Emotions only. There's not a lot of core emotions. Here are some core emotions I've put out here: Anger, fear, pain, joy, passion, love, shame, guilt. Then a lot of more nuanced emotions are going to fall under these categories: Frustration would fall under anger; Anxiety or powerless might fall under fear; Hurt will fall under pain. But just get really tuned in to what is it that you're actually feeling and there will be an emotions wheel that you can look at that will help you. Sometimes we just don't know. If we haven't been taught, if nobody ever held space for us to do that or if we were never taught to name our emotions or if we were actually taught to not ever have emotions, then you're not going to know necessarily. So this might take practice.

2. Lead with vulnerable emotions

The other thing you want to do is try to lead with your vulnerable emotions, which is always the hardest thing. It's so important because, especially, a lot of us will lead with anger or frustration. Those are more fiery emotions. Those are more defended emotions. Those emotions defend against the more vulnerable, soft emotions underneath it. If you think about anger, usually when you go deeper, you realize it really comes from hurt or it really comes from fear. Those are more vulnerable emotions. So lead with the vulnerable emotions if you tend to default to anger as your first emotion or your only emotion. I will say, I will add to this, if you're somebody who tends to lead with the more disempowered emotions like hurt, if you're always feeling hurt and you're not in touch with any of the more fiery emotions, then I would try to go against your default. This is all about pattern interrupt. Lead with your anger. Lead with your frustration. Lead with your upset. Whatever your default is, you want to go against that. This is a little bit more nuanced. This is a little bit pickier. If you're not really sure what I'm talking about or if you find that this is making you feel overwhelmed or confused, don't worry about this second part. Just focus on the first part for now.

3. Be aware of interpretations (Disrespected, ignored, etc are not feelings)

Also for this part in when you're talking about your feelings and your emotions, there's a very slippery slope that goes from feelings into the interpretation. Be aware of interpretation. For example, if you say, "I feel really disrespected," or "I feel really ignored," or "I feel invisible," those are not emotions. Those are interpretations. I know that that sounds really picky but it's so important to distinguish between the two. So much of this work is unraveling the meaning-making and changing our core beliefs. Also getting really in touch in our bodies with what our emotions are. This might take practice.

What you need

The final part of the feedback wheel is moving into what you need. This is the request. This is where it gets to be constructive. I love this part. You want to ask yourself if you're the one giving feedback:

1. What would make you feel better now?

What is it that would make me feel better? What do I need from the other person?

2. Must be something that can be given in the present moment

It has to be something that's in the present moment. If they're asking, "What can I do?" and you're like, "You should have done that last week. It's already too late." That's not constructive. If what you need is something that should have happened last week, that doesn't count. That doesn't count. You cannot use that in this. You might be tempted to do that because you're really frustrated and you're really wanting to globalize this trigger into history.

3. It can be anything

a. Commitment to be more aware in the future

It's super important to be able to identify like, "What is it that would really honestly make me feel good?" It could be anything. It could be a commitment to be more aware in the future - a commitment to pay attention, a commitment to be on time.

B. Acknowledgement/apology/expression of understanding

It could be an acknowledgement or an apology. You might just need an apology. You might just need an expression of understanding. Sometimes that's enough just to feel truly understood.

C. Agreement to do something (help the kids, give a hug)

It might be an agreement to do something in the future - an agreement to sit down and do a budget meeting or help

the kids. It might just be, "I need a hug," "I just needed you to listen and to have a hug." That's it! Really have a think about that.

If you don't know what you need then you really shouldn't be giving feedback because it's not going to be constructive. You have to give your spouse a chance to win and you have to give yourself the chance to actually clear the resentment and feel better. This is so important. The whole entire point of doing the feedback wheel is to get repair. It's to clear the air. It's to feel better, to feel like you can turn the page and move on and remove any obstacles to feeling close to or at least in a place of peace with your spouse. But the good news is you get to decide even though it might be a challenge sometimes. I ask people, "What do you need right now?" And they don't know. They might say something really vague like, "I just need them to be more supportive. I need my spouse to be more supportive." What does that look like? How would they know that? What would have to be happening for you to know that they were being supportive? Because what's supportive to you might be different than what's supportive to me. But you get to decide. So think very carefully. Do a brainstorm on it. If you're not really sure and really be guided by this question, "If they give that to me, will I feel good enough to say, 'Okay fine! I can turn the page on this. I feel repaired?'" If you can't say 'yes,' then you haven't arrived at the right thing yet. This is trickier than it seems. Some people know exactly what they need. Some people don't. You'll feel this out and you'll get the hang of where your areas are for growth. And I'm here to support you if you have any questions.

EXAMPLES:

Here's a couple of examples just so you can see this in action. This is what it might look like:

- When I heard you say to our son: "What's your problem?" and your voice was raised
This is the trigger part: "When I heard you say to our son, 'What's your problem?' and your voice was raised..." Notice that it's very specific in terms of what the words were that were spoken and that the voice was raised. Instead of saying, "When I heard you being rude to our son," or "when I heard you being sarcastic to our son," or "when I heard you yelling at our son..." Those are interpretations. This is like you can't really argue with this. "When I heard these words come out of your mouth with a raised voice..." that's the trigger.
- The way I interpreted that was that you are judging him and that he's going to feel bad about his emotions
"The way that I interpreted that was that you're judging him and that he's going to feel bad about his emotions..." so this is the story. I could go on, too. I could be like, "The meaning that I give that is that you are hurting his feelings and you're ruining your connection with him and you're creating a culture in our home of not being safe with our emotions," or "you're damaging him," or "you never listen to me because we've talked about this before." It could be anything. This is where you can fit in a You-statement because you've already owned that it's your story. You're not 100%. You're not doubling down like it's an objective reality.
- I felt scared that he won't want to share his negative emotions with us in the future, that we won't feel safe to him, and that makes me sad too.
Then you move into the feelings: "How I felt was scared. I was scared that he won't want to share his negative emotions with us in the future, scared that we won't feel safe to him and that makes me sad too." Scared and sad are the emotions here. You don't even have to say scared about the thing in particular, you could just say, "I felt scared," "I felt frustrated," and "I felt sad." Sometimes, it's nice to just say what you're scared of, what you're hurt about to give a little bit of a reason, so that they can really understand what's at stake for you. It's not to be disputed. It's really just you've already acknowledged that your feelings are the result of your story. Does that make sense?
- Could you please be more curious in the future if he's upset, for example, help him name his emotions to connect, and then offer to help?
Then for the request, it could be something like, "Could you please be more curious in the future if he's upset?" Now, if I left it there and I said "Could you please be more curious in the future?" that might not be specific enough of what does that look like. So here I'm giving examples. "You could help him name his emotions first to connect when he's upset and then offer to help him. That would be something that would help me feel like you're doing things differently, that you've taken my feedback, that you've considered me." This is basically asking for an agreement or a commitment for the future.

Another example would be:

- When I saw you made plans with your friends on Saturday
“When I saw you made plans with your friends on Saturday...” Let's say, “I saw that on the shared calendar...,” or “I heard you on the phone making those plans...”
- The meaning I gave that is that you don't remember we talked about dinner that night, and that you aren't prioritizing our time together
“The meaning that I gave that or the story I tell myself is that you don't remember that we talked about dinner that night,” or that “you blew off..” I could say, “you blew off that we were gonna have dinner that night and that you're not prioritizing our time together.” I could go on and say, “the meaning that I give that is that this is what you always do, that you never listen. because I've already said this is the meaning that I give it right or wrong. I could be wrong but that's where my mind goes.”
- I feel disappointed, hurt, and scared you aren't into me anymore
“How I feel is disappointed and hurt and scared that you're just not that into me anymore.”
- What would help is if you could share with me your thought process around making those plans, and to make a solid plan for a date with me
“What would help me is if you could share with me your thought process around making those plans.” That's a request that could help you feel better, I guess, in the sense of if you understood their thought process, you would understand that it wasn't personal right. As I wrote this, I was thinking, like you don't want to be asking from the place of share with your thought process so that I can pick it apart and argue with it. It's not a rhetorical question. It truly is coming from a place of, “I want to understand because I think it will help me feel better.” The specific request of, “Let's make a solid plan for a date with me to make up for that because that was supposed to be our dinner.” That would be an example of a very clear request.

GUIDELINES

The guidelines that you have to follow are that:

1. You must have an agreement to give feedback
You have to have an agreement to give feedback. There's a lot of things going into this being successful. Once you get it dialed in, this might seem a lot like a lot. But I promise you, once it becomes second nature after just practicing it a few times, it's going to change everything for you. The first and one of the hardest things is that you have to have an agreement to give feedback. Let's say you've got some burning feedback. Let's say your spouse is really exhausted. They just came home and they didn't sleep well the night before. They're already grumpy and you ask them, “Hey, I have some feedback for you. Would this be a good time?” They have the right to say no. “No, I really can't handle that tonight. I don't think I have what it takes. Let's do it tomorrow.” You really have to set it up for success. If you insist upon giving the feedback and forcing them to listen when they're not ready, you're setting it up to fail. It's very important to be strategic about this.
2. One-way street
You also have to agree that it's a one-way street. The person who is giving the feedback, it's a one-way street for them. The person who's receiving the feedback is going to receive what they have to say. They're listening to what they have to say. It's not their turn to share their story or their feelings or what they think happened. If you're the recipient of feedback and you've agreed to receive feedback, you're agreeing to it being a one-way street. Meaning “I'm gonna listen to you. I'm gonna respond to you. I'm not gonna bring my stuff into this at all. I'm not gonna do tit-for-tat. I'm not gonna defend myself. I'm not gonna explain myself. I'm not gonna bring anything else into it. This is for you.” That's really what the one-way street means.
3. Two sentences for each part MAX
The other guideline, and this was super hard for me, you have to limit it to two sentences for each section MAX. I used to make mine really long sentences. Honestly, this is going to be something that's going to make it more digestible and more successful. It doesn't mean you have to have two emotions only or two interpretations or stories. You could have more than one emotion or more than one interpretation. But you just want to limit it to two normal length sentences that you could speak. The person that's listening would be able to track it. If it gets to be too long, the other person can't track it.

4. The listener paraphrases before responding

The other guideline is that the listener paraphrases before responding. Once you've given feedback -- you've gone through step one: the trigger; step two: the meaning; step three: the feelings; step four: the request -- the listener will now paraphrase what they heard you say about those things. You want to try to hit all four points. As you're listening, if you're the one listening, you're listening for the trigger, the meaning, the feelings and the requests. Then, once you've paraphrased it, let's say you don't get it. Let's say you missed something. There was something really important that got missed. You say, "Did I get that right?" The person who gave you the feedback can say, "No, that's not quite it." Then they can correct it. And you paraphrase it again. You paraphrase it as many times as needed until the person giving feedback feels like you really understood it. And then you get to respond.

5. The listener is as generous as possible

When you respond, you're going to be as generous as possible. This is really important because you might not be able to give everything or your spouse not be able to give everything that you're asking for. But if you come into it with a spirit of generosity, looking for what you can give, as opposed to leading with what you're not going to be able to give, you're going to get a lot more out of this. For example: One time I asked my husband when the feedback wheel if he could acknowledge that his intentions were, and I don't even remember what it was, but that his intentions were something. And because I really thought that he was not being honest with me about his intentions. I wanted him to own his intentions. It was based on the past. What he did was, he said, "You know, I can't say that because that wasn't my truth. That wasn't true for me. But what I can do is I can own that that used to be the case. I have done that before. I can understand why you would think that. I'm definitely gonna promise you that I won't do that anymore, that I'll be really upfront about what my intentions are. I'll be transparent about what my intentions are." He couldn't give me what I wanted but he could give me the spirit of what I wanted. If what you really want is a hug and they are just too upset to give you a hug but they would be willing to say, "I'll give you a hug later after I cool off," you want to try to lead with *what can I give as opposed to what I'm not gonna do*.

6. Roles are clear

Finally, your roles are clear, which I've touched on already. The role of the person giving the feedback is to truly articulate what they want to say using the four-point structure, following the guidelines and coming in with a clear request for the listener to be successful. The listener's role is to hold space, allow it to be a one-way street, not get defensive and to give through the lenses of love in looking at your spouse and thinking, "You know what? This is the person that I love. This is the person that I want to have a good relationship with. My job in this conversation is to repair and to clear out hurts. I'm doing this for them right now. That's my role." Then you can always switch later. But I don't recommend doing it on the same day. If you are listening to feedback and you're like, "Oh my Gosh! This is so loaded. There's so much here. There's so much that I want to say about like how I looked at the situation that they're giving feedback on," table it. Write it down. Bring it up tomorrow. Put it into your own feedback wheel. But you don't want it to be like, "Here's my feedback wheel," and now it's their feedback wheel. It's like tit for tat. We don't want to do that.

MOST COMMON PITFALLS

The most common pitfalls that I want to just have you be aware of. In doing this, I've given people the four-point structure and a few of the guidelines, but there's common things that I've noticed that have cropped up, where people will come back to me or whether I'm doing it with them live or whether they've done it on their own and they come back and they report to me what's happened. So I want to share with you what these are. There's eight common mistakes that people make that I want you just to kind of get ahead of and be aware of. Now, if you make one of these mistakes, it's not the end of the world. It's normal. It does take time to practice. But I want you to be familiar.

1. Interpretation (part 2) bleeds into the trigger (part 1) or the feelings (part 3)

The interpretation ends up bleeding into the trigger (part 1), or the feelings (part 3). Anything that's an interpretation needs to stay in part 2. I already gave you an example of an interpretation in part 1, where you would say, "When you were rude to me," or "when you were ignoring me," that would be an interpretation bleeding into part 1. Interpretation bleeding into part 3 would be, "how I feel is that you're never there for me." That's not a feeling. "How I feel is completely invisible and disrespected," again, that's interpretation. So that's important to be aware of. That is a tricky thing.

2. Not being clear to your spouse what you need NOW so they can help you feel better

The second thing is not being clear with your spouse about what you need now so that they can help you feel better. A lot of

times it's very general. Your spouse might actually not be able to give you what you want because they're not really even clear on what you're saying or what that would actually look like. Then they're scared that they're going to fail. They hesitate. Then you start to think, "Oh my gosh! They're not even willing to give this to me." It's because they don't really know what that means. An example would be like if your request is "I want you to be more aware of me. I want you to be more tuned into me." You have to be really clear about what does that exactly look like because they might feel like they already are. Then they will feel like they can't give that to you. So you have to be as specific as possible.

3. You don't get agreement from the other person (wrong timing)

Also, a common mistake is that you don't get agreement from the other person. It's the wrong timing, that I touched on before. This is hard if you're really pissed off or you're feeling urgent about it. You're in a place of urgency and ruminating. It's tempting to want to just blow past that and be like, "I'm just gonna wing this." It's really an invitation for it not to go well. Then that is inviting the old story. It's not pattern interrupt. If you are an avoidant person, pattern interrupt would be being very proactive in setting up a feedback wheel. You still have to follow and get the agreement, of course. If your default mode is that your high conflict, the pattern interrupt would be to be very very sparing when you bring up a feedback wheel. If you're not sure about that then just check with me.

4. You make it too long or lump in a bunch of other things

Another mistake is that people make it way too long or they lump in a bunch of other things. "When you did this, this, this, this, and this." "When you did this against this backdrop of like all these other things that you did this week. When all these things happened..." You don't want to do that. You don't want to have too much story under the interpretation part because then the person gets flooded. There's too many things to try to track and respond to. We want to keep it really clean. If you feel like there's too much, then just separate them out. You can make different feedback wheels. You might find that you're trying to put three into one.

5. The receiver of the feedback starts to explain or take issue with meaning made

The other mistake is that the receiver of the feedback starts to explain or take issue with the meaning made. If you're hearing their meaning-making or you're hearing their trigger and you're like, "I don't think that's what happened.." You start to explain or take issue or defend or say, "that's not what happened," or "here's what was really going on." You feel like you can't even go on with it because you're not agreeing with the premise, that's a mistake. If your spouse isn't doing it right and there could be some things that are coming up that are making it really difficult to just hear that, if that's the case, let me know. We'll try to break it down and see basically where did it go awry. It can go awry in the delivery or it can go awry in the receiving. But what this mistake is really where you feel that urge to argue with what they're saying and what their perceptions were.

6. The Feedback giver is not explicit that their meaning is a story, right or wrong

The other thing you want to make sure is that you're very explicit if you're giving feedback, that your meaning is a story, right or wrong. Sometimes people skip past that. They just go right into it. They don't say. You have to say, "the meaning that I give that..," or "this is where my brain went..," "this is what my mind did..," "this is how it landed for me..," "this is the interpretation that I gave it..," "this is how I heard it, right or wrong." You have to give that disclaimer to reduce defensiveness in the person that's listening. Does that make sense? I actually like saying right or wrong. "The story that I tell myself.." or "the way I hear that, right or wrong, is.." because then I'm basically giving myself an out. There's nothing for them to argue with. It's just what my meaning is. You can't argue with me about the meaning that I give something. "I'm telling you what meaning I made out of it. There isn't anything to argue with. You might have a different meaning. But this isn't your turn." You see what I'm saying? That's really what I'm getting at here.

7. Getting hung up on the formality

The other thing that people do is get hung up on the formality of this structure. A lot of times, people are like, "I don't want to do the feedback wheel because it's just so formal. It just feels so awkward. It feels so mechanical. It doesn't feel natural." I just think people have to get over that, to be honest with you. First of all, anything that you're learning new is going to be mechanical, is going to be awkward. Any new tool, any new thing, you ever learn in life is first awkward. You have to give yourself permission for that. The second thing is that you don't have to use the words that I'm giving. You don't always have to say, "the story that I tell myself is.." You can use your own words. You can make it your own. The point is that you're separating out what you're communicating into those four things. When you get good at this, you just sound like you talking. You just sound like you talking. You don't look like you're going into some like, "Now, I'm going to enter into this alternate reality and start sounding like a robot." It might feel weird at first but it just works. It just really really really works. Any discomfort that you have around that or feeling like this isn't your authentic self, it's just not true. It's just a structure that allows you to be more authentic because you get to say exactly what bothered you. You get to say exactly what was going on for you, exactly

what the meaning was for you, exactly how you feel and what you need. There's no way to be more transparent than that. There's no way to be more authentic, genuine and honest than that.

The discipline that it takes to communicate it in the structure, what feels hard about that is not moving into You-statements, is separating out the meaning from the feelings. Those are things that you have to do to own your part and to stay in your lane and to have a healthy communication. That's just what it takes. If you're not willing to get past that, then you're not really willing to enter into healthy communication. You're hanging on to something else. You're hanging onto your comfort zone somehow. You're making that more important. That's something I just want to say at the outset.

8. Lack of gratitude for healthy feedback

This is the last common pitfall is that there's a lack of gratitude for healthy feedback. In other words, there's a tendency, especially when people come into this program, because there's a history that brought you here, there's a tendency to hear the feedback in not the most loving light and to not recognize that it's actually a gift. If your spouse is trying to communicate using the feedback wheel, you should be grateful. What that means is they are being conscious and mindful to stay in their lane, to own their stuff, to not project it on to you, to be clear in giving you what you need to be successful in repairing. It is a gift. So often, we do our spouse a disservice because we're not clear. We figure if we have to be explicit then they don't really care about us. "If I have to be explicit, I have to tell you, then we have a problem." You're just supposed to know. Maybe you've been on the receiving end of that and feeling like it's a no-win situation. It's a gift when you can be clear. It's a gift that your spouse is sharing themselves with you. It's a gift when they're willing to be vulnerable with you and literally open the door to their mind and their heart and give you the keys to what's going to make things right. If you're resisting that, you really want to look and go, "Why am I resisting that?" "Why don't I want to be generous?" "Why am I not able to take this with gratitude?" Usually, it's going to be something like resentment. It might be a history of criticism. It might be that you really can't hear it through the present moment lens. You're listening to it through the old lens, like we talked about before. But please be grateful. And if you're nervous, if you're giving the feedback, and you're scared of giving the feedback because you're worried that they're not going to like it, your spouse isn't going to like it -- they're going to get mad, they're going to feel defensive, they're going to feel hurt -- just remember this: it's a gift to them. A healthy relationship is one in which each person honors the other person and wants to be close to the other person and wants to be the one who they share themselves with.

If you go through this program and you unravel everything and we build all the foundation and you come out the other side and your spouse isn't really wanting to hear what you have to say in your feedback wheels, then we have a larger problem. But I want you guys to really just try to do this as much as you can. I will be modeling this on the group coaching calls. This is something you guys can send me in writing if you need some tweaks. This is going to be a foundational tool that we come back to again and again in this program. Remember that it's gonna feel vulnerable. It's gonna feel scary. *What if I do this and I do it perfectly and my spouse doesn't respond in the right way? Or they don't give me what I'm asking for. They don't treat that with gratitude.* That might happen. But the win is that you did the feedback wheel. The win is not determined by your spouse's response to it. The win and the celebration is that you use this structure. I really do believe that in time, if your spouse isn't receptive to it the first couple times, they will. This is something that we were literally just paving the path to that healthy open communication. It might just take one little stone at a time. Focus on your input, and not the outcome.

USE IT! It's YOUR responsibility to give feedback!

All right, you guys. That is it! My final piece of advice is to use it. You have to use it. It's not going to work if you don't use it. I really do believe that if you put all of your communication through this structure, if you use these distinctions to organize your communications, not only are you going to get forced basically to understand yourself better and to know what you need, you are going to have healthier relationships all the way around. Not just in with your spouse but all the way around in every relationship in your life.

And remember that it's your responsibility to give feedback. If you are noticing that you're blocking connection basically because you're pissed or if you notice that something has come up for you and now your spouse is trying to connect or hang out or make a bid for connection and you're not able to join it because you're hanging on to something, this is something that's your responsibility to bring up. If you're the one that has the problem, if you're the one that has the feedback, it's your job to bring that up. Now, that said, at this stage, pattern interrupt -- remember this is for emergencies only. But in general, what I tell people, as we go through the phases and the modules and you come towards the end of the program, a rule that I ask people to live by is to have integrity with themselves and keep their own house clean. Always asking yourself the question, "Is there anything that's happening inside of me that is blocking closeness with my spouse? And if there is, then I'm not doing anybody any favors by

keeping it to myself.” For those of you that are avoidant, this is going to be a big challenge. You're off the hook for now with powder to interrupt. I hope that helps you guys. I look forward to your questions. Be sure to reach out if you have any questions about that in the group. If you want to send me your feedback wheels that you're preparing, go ahead and email me or even better yet, post it in the group so other people can learn as well, if you're comfortable doing that. And I look forward to seeing you guys inside the next lesson.