

If you ever find you want to blame or punish your partner when you have felt hurt or upset by something they did, recognize that you are giving up a loving flow within yourself as well as between the two of you. There really is a better way.

The degree to which you are caught in blaming/punishing/manipulating/stonewalling/controlling is the same degree to which YOU are disempowered. Truly satisfying relationships require truly empowered partners. Instead of playing the games listed above, when you learn how to stay grounded and emotionally regulated while at the same time reveal/express your genuine feelings and wants, that's when mutual understanding between the two of you is now possible, and in fact inevitable.

Authentic empowerment means you are able to be LOVING AND DIRECT AT THE SAME TIME with your partner. Direct does not mean demanding. And loving doesn't mean being a door mat. Being as loving as you are direct in expressing your feelings and wants creates the greatest chance of your partner meeting you where you want to be met. As Terry Real, a contemporary Couples Therapist and Educator on relational couples therapy likes to say: "There's nothing that harshness does that loving firmness doesn't do better."

Threatening to leave, being accusatory, mean, retaliatory, controlling, needing to be right or being passive or passive-aggressive, nasty or collapsing into whining and other childish behavior will not ever get you what you want in a relationship. These and other emotionally immature behaviors are a clear sign of unresolved relational wounding and developmental impasses that are in genuine need of loving attending before the relationship can feel like a safe and wonderful connection again.

Additionally, if you are using your partner's behavior as a reason for your reactivity (the opposite of empowerment), recognize that you are agreeing to an ongoing painful entanglement.

The main reason people blame is because either they feel blamed themselves or unmet on some level and this makes them feel like they need to recover a sense of power or security by returning the blame or hurt -- it has no happy ending. I call it the highway to hell. The other possibility is that they have unresolved childhood wounding and are triggered into a fight or flight state and are stuck in reactivity unable to respond constructively. These are really one in the same.

Without exception, when couples learn how to self-regulate so they can listen to, validate and empathize with their partner instead of correcting or showing where and how their partner is wrong (yes, even when the other partner is off base), the true mutual understanding that eventually unfolds because of the loving openness always creates a profound sense of ease as well as mutual understanding in both and then the loving, playful and compassionate flow within the partnership resumes. That is until the next trigger occurs and the couple gets another opportunity to grow. Relationships always need to move in the direction of growth or they will spiral down and each person will feel that the relationship is unbearable. If you and your partner are caught in the downward spiral, working with an experienced Couples Therapist is paramount, and eventually you will obtain the skills and ability to shift the downward spiral into an upward spiral on your own as a couple, enjoying all the wonderfulness of being in intimate relationship.

Please feel free to reach to me if you're interested in couples or individual therapy for relationship goals.

