

How to Communicate Your Feelings

Step 1

Find out what you are feeling by:

- Tuning into your body. Note any tightness, tension or nervousness.
- Noticing where in your body the sensation is located; i.e. butterflies in the stomach, heart thumping, sweaty palms.
- Determining whether the sensation is strong, medium or mild.
- Describing the sensation with a feeling word (use the feelings list if necessary).

Step 2

Communicate your feelings directly by:

- Making sure that you have another person's attention and making eye contact. Slow down.
- Using "I" statements; i.e. "I feel sad" as opposed to "You make me sad".
- Being as specific as possible; i.e. "I feel sad when you look away while I talk to you".

Remember:

- When you feel flooded by feelings, it's not a good time to try to resolve conflict. You first have to use outer or inner resources to calm yourself down.
- Work with strong emotions by breathing into your belly slowly and deliberately for a while.
- When you don't know what you are feeling, don't try to figure it out through thinking. The seat of your feelings is your body. Turn to physical sensations.
- If you feel tempted to ask "Why did you do?", the question is usually an expression of anger. Say instead: "I feel angry when you did"
- You are responsible for *your* feelings; the other person is responsible for his or hers.
- Mixed emotions are common and normal.

Gudrun Zomerland, MFT

707-575-8468 415-446-5532

www.chinnstreetcounseling.com