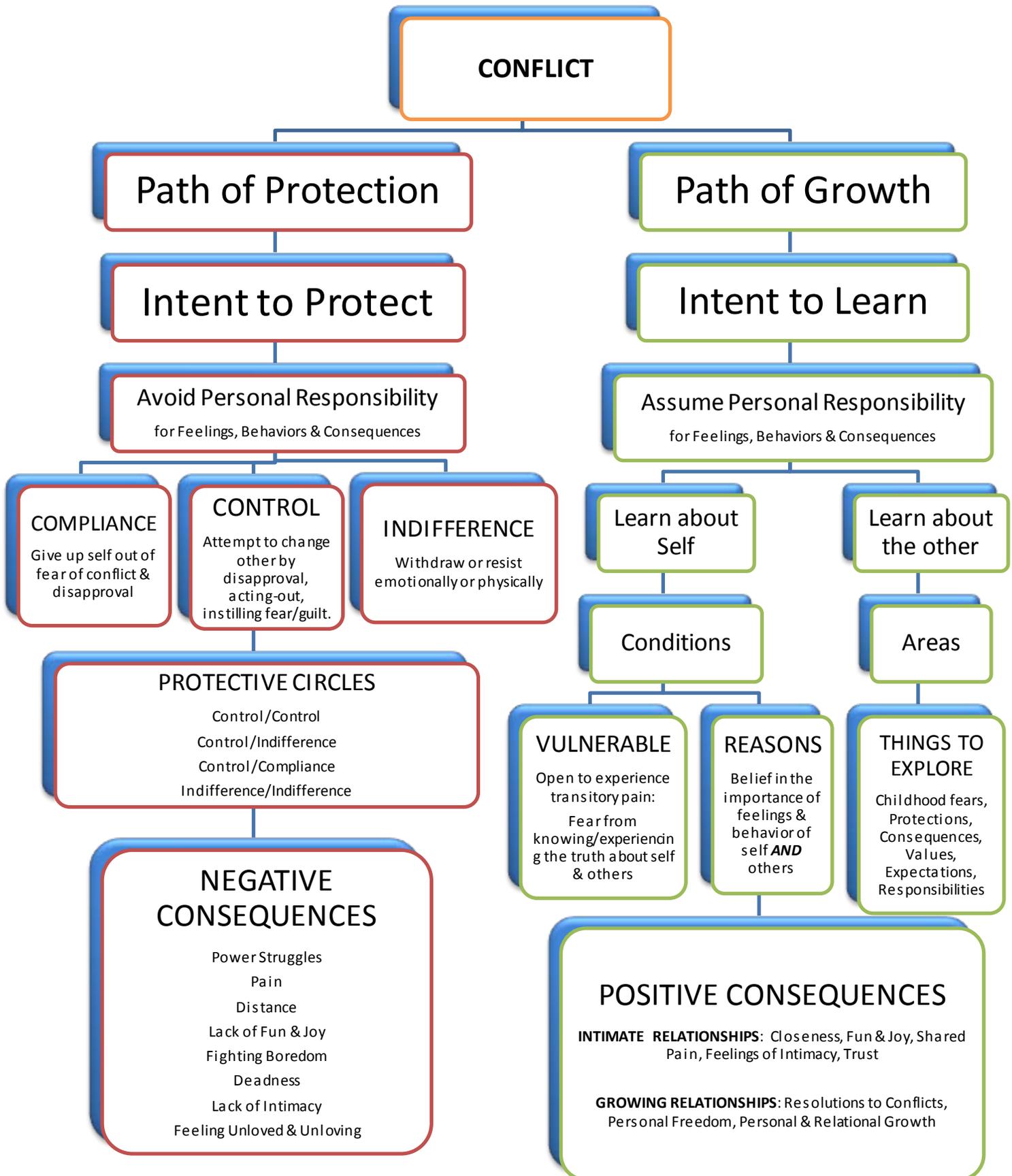


# PATHS OF CONFLICT



**I... [describe what you sensed]**

See, Hear, Taste, Smell, Feel

**Wait** for the other  
person's Response

I STATEMENTS...  
(Communication Wheel)

**I Think...**

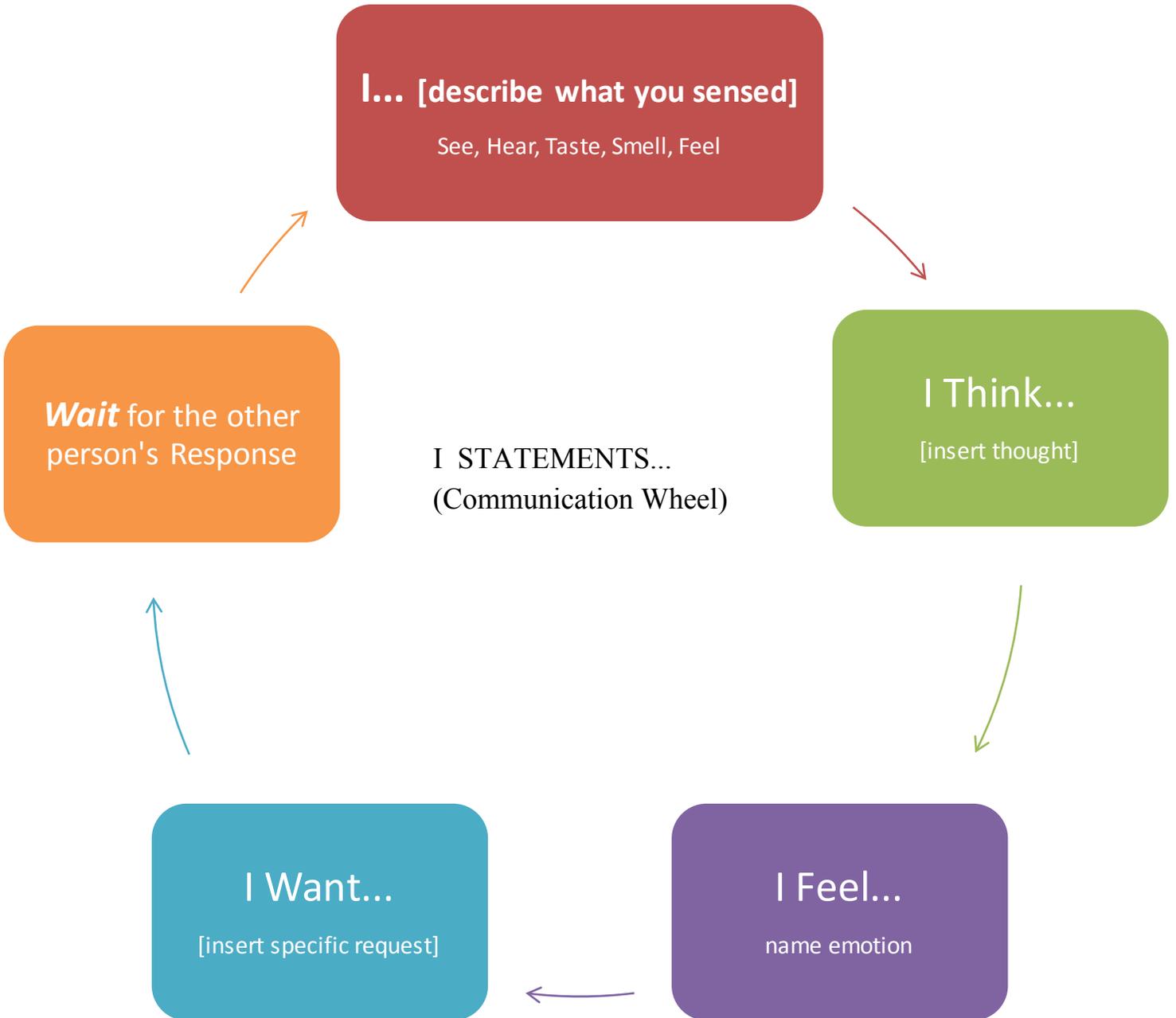
[insert thought]

**I Want...**

[insert specific request]

**I Feel...**

name emotion



## Speaker / Listener Skill

### SPEAKER

1. Speak directly to the person. Look at the person you are talking to (if it is respectful).
2. State what you think and feel clearly. Use Short, concise sentences.
3. Don't attack, accuse blame, or "put down" the person to whom you are talking or, or any other family member you are talking about.
4. Don't interpret, mind read, or attribute hidden meanings to other family member behaviors or statements – describe the behaviors and statements accurately – have them mean exactly what the words say.
5. When you have finished speaking, say "I'm finished" and ask the other person if they have understood what you were trying to communicate.
6. Ask the person to paraphrase what you have just said so you can know if what they heard is what you were trying to say.
7. Don't monopolize the conversation

### LISTENER

1. Wait patiently while someone is speaking. Listen carefully to the words they are saying – you will be paraphrasing at the end.
2. Look at the person who is speaking (if it is respectful)
3. Don't interrupt when he/she is speaking. You will have your turn to reply/answer when he/she is through and you have repeated.
4. As you listen, try to put yourself in the speaker's place. Try to understand how he/she feels, how he/she sees things, and how he/she experiences you. This does not mean you agree or it is how you are – you are just trying to see the situation through their eyes.
5. If you are unclear or don't understand what the speaker means, ask him/her to repeat what they just said.
6. When the speaker is finished, repeat back to him/her what you have heard. This will help the speaker determine whether he/she has been understood.
7. When the speaker indicates that you have understood, it is your turn to reply – you become the SPEAKER, they become the LISTENER.

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis A. Bagarozzi & Stephen A. Anderson. Personal, Marital and Family Myths: Theoretical Formulations and Clinical Strategies, (New York, London; W.W. Norton & Company), 1989.

## Rules for Fair Fighting

All couples fight. The difference between couples that stay together and those that are divorced is whether they learn to use the fight to bring them closer or further apart. One way to use the fight to bring you closer is to learn to fight fair.

The goal of fights that bring people closer is to learn more about the other person and yourself. If the goal is to win, no matter who leaves victorious – both lose.

The following are some rules to follow to help make the fight, a fair fight.

1. Be specific. Use “I statements.” The closer you can get to the exact words or exact behaviors you want to address, the better your chances of getting resolution.
2. ASK for what YOU WANT. Do not expect them to “fix” the problem from your description – tell them or give an example of what you want the result to look like – ask yourself “How will I know when it is done?” If the goal is vague, there is greater opportunity for a result that does not work.
3. One problem at a time.
  - a. Do not over load your partner with many complaints at once, even in giving examples. This makes the situation seem hopeless when it is not and gives a foothold to depression. Solve one thing at a time.
  - b. No Cross-Complaining: do not answer a complaint with another complaint – deal with the issue, then if you want to present an issue of your own it will be the focus.
  - c. No Counter-Demands: solve the presented problem first – schedule time to resolve the other issues identified.
4. Stay in the present. What is important is how each of you feel right now.
  - a. Do not bring up issues from the past, do not bring up how many times they have never – or will never / always do something.
  - b. Refrain from superlatives: always, never, should, etc.
5. Focus on the problem NOT the other person. When two people focus on solving a problem it is better than one. When two people focus on each other, the problem sleeps comfortably between them and is never bothered.
  - a. Define the problem in what the other person does or says (behavior) NOT who they are – Do not use labels.
  - b. Stay away from Sarcasm or course jesting – it moves the focus away from the problem onto the other person.

6. Respect the other person's view
  - a. Don't correct statements about feelings, accept what they say – do not tell them what they should know or feel.
  - b. Do not assume you KNOW or predict what the other person is thinking or feeling – check out what you think in plain language.
  - c. Don't interrupt – let the other person finish, and repeat what you heard before you reply.
  
7. You are responsible for your own expressions – verbal, facial and physical (body).
  - a. Refrain from facial expressions, sounds, nods or other signals that interfere with mutual resolution of the problem.
  
8. Physical Violence is NOT ALLOWED and not to be tolerated. This is a firm guideline for fair fighting.
  
9. TIME-OUT is ok. If things get too heated, take a break rather than doing or saying something you are sorry for later. The person asking for the time-out is responsible for establishing and initiating resumption of the conversation. Time-out is NOT to be used as method for escaping or avoiding the issue. It will be just as hard for the person asking for the time out to resume as it was for the person hearing it to wait – respect the effort on both parts by allowing for separation AND by bringing the problem back.
  
10. Speak the TRUTH in LOVE. Tell the truth – no matter what. It does not have to be course and disrespectful – if you don't know how to do both at same time – find a friend, pastor or counselor to help.
  - a. When speaking to others – ensure the focus is to figure out how to tell the truth in a way that is respectful to the other person.
  - b. Do not use others to make your partner do what you want, or as a way to make yourself feel better by generating agreement among your friends. In this way you teach them to respect you when they feel you are in the wrong.
  - c. Do not triangulate others into the argument, except out of compliance with Matthew.

## **Emotions and what they feel like:**

(From Emotions work-packet, Meier Clinics)

### Test KEY

1. A feeling of power in the gut is followed by a surge of muscle tension in the lower, middle and upper back and shoulders, followed by a rush of adrenaline and blood flow through out the body. What am I? (Anger).
2. A little empty feeling begins to localize in the throat and head and finally builds until we begin to cry. Also, a hollow feeling in the upper chest and gut is experienced, especially when deep loss has been experienced or re-experienced. What am I? (Sad)
3. An overall sense of exhilaration based on a specific accomplishment or favorable environmental circumstance in the moment. A feeling of lightness, power and energy is felt. A surge of adrenaline seems to enhance our sense of self and our connectedness with the universe. We feel warm all over. What am I? (happy).
4. A pit in the stomach, as if we've been kicked, is felt – plus a feeling of violation, betrayal, or pain. What am I? (Hurt).
5. At its deepest level, this emotion is experienced in the lower abdomen and genital area. It is a feeling of being broken, defective, unworthy, unlovable, stupid, ugly, dirty, awful, bad, evil, crazy or worthless. The stronger the experience of this emotion, the more likely it is that we are carrying it for someone else or for the family system from which it came. What am I? (Shame).
6. Felt in the upper chest and breathing passages. It is a sense that somehow our life and survival are being threatened. It is felt as a sense of dread and anxiety that eventually spreads throughout the entire body What am I? (Fear).
7. A feeling of being separate, disconnected empty, devoid of human contact and companionship. What am I? (Lonely).
8. A heavy burden or responsibility urges us to act to correct some real or imagined wrong. What am I? (guilt).
9. An overall warm, comfortable feeling of “completeness,” “okay-ness,” and connectedness not necessarily connected to the moment or environmental circumstances. A healthy sense of power and relatedness with self and others while at the same time feeling of confidence in self to face and address what happens next. What am I? Safe / Joy

## **EMOTIONS**

(Energy in Motion)

Emotions are positive in nature, in that they are given by God to serve a purpose and give us energy to act on perceptions of our environment. Emotions can come from what we sense, what we think, what we remember. Emotional maturity comes from the ability to differentiate between thoughts and emotions.

Like any energy, emotions (while positive), can be corrupted or made toxic. It is said that "Emotions buried alive, never die." The first step of the path to health is to recognize the intended, healthy purposes of our emotions; the second is to express them in a way that allows them to dissipate or be released.

Purposes of Emotion:

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Gives Energy to:</b>
Anger	Signals an injustice or threat to one's sense of value, ability to communicate self	Energy to respect (protect) Ourselves (self value)
Fear	Signals danger to basic needs.	Energy to Fight or Flight.
Sadness	Signals a loss has (past) occurred	Energy to Grieve the loss
Loneliness	Signals need for connection	Energy to risk letting others get to know us.
Hurt	Signals violation of basic needs (pain) HAS occurred (past).	Energy to Heal.
Guilt	Signals violation of our laws, rules, values or beliefs.	Energy to take corrective action.
Shame	Signals human limitations.	Energy to set boundaries.
Happy	Signals achievement of established goal or expectation.	Energy to Celebrate
Safe	Signals state of shalom peace – all things in their place – as they should be. Joy. A required state for other positive emotions to be experienced.	Energy to Thrive, Bloom, Self-express.

Steps to Release emotional energy:

1. Recognize the emotion – name it.
2. Identify the source of the emotion – where is it coming from.
3. Identify the purpose/message of the emotion – what does it want me to address, see; what does it want to say.
4. Process the emotion – Is the source present? Is the message accurate? Do I need to act on the situation, the thoughts or the emotion? What action is necessary, what are my options?
5. Express the emotion appropriately.

