

WHEN TO DO TIME-OUTS

When we are triggered by something or someone and can't communicate with an open mind and heart, it is because our inner adaptive child is taking over. Try to catch this early — before you are able to retaliate — to approach the event or person with mindfulness. By taking a time-out to assess the situation, we are able to come back to our center of health: the Wise Adult self.

- Determine the length of your time-out: 20 minutes, an hour, a morning, afternoon, evening, or even overnight.
 - Let your partner know how long you will take. This builds trust in the relationship.
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4 STEPS OF THE FEEDBACK WHEEL FOR COMMUNICATION

1. What I saw and heard. These are facts about the event.
2. What I made up in my head. These are interpretations of the event. A majority of our perception (about 80%) is influenced by our personal history and will trigger our inner adaptive child.
3. How I feel. This includes any specific emotions that were triggered from the event.
4. What I'd like to achieve. This is how you'd like to change behaviorally as a result from the event, or perhaps you would simply like to be heard. Often, you will need to let go of the outcome to achieve this goal.

SPEAKER

- Speak from a place of the Wise Adult.
- Remember the person you are speaking to is someone you love.
- Ask the listener, “Is this a good time to share and give feedback?”

If listener says no to your request, ask them, “What can I give you for you to be able to give me this?” If they say nothing, take some space to process. Mourn the loss of what you can’t get. If that is too painful, then it is “relationship reconciling.” (Ask yourself, “Am I getting enough in the relationship to grieve the loss of this one thing?”)

LISTENER

- Acceptance paradox: Whatever is true, own it. Validate it by repeating what the speaker said.
- Empathy: Validate the speaker’s feelings. Try placing yourself in their shoes.
- Can you be generous? Can you give the speaker their request?

If yes, confirm that you will work on fulfilling their request. If you cannot do what your partner is asking, be curious. Ask for more information to see if you are understanding them correctly.

BOUNDARIES

We all have two boundaries: inner and outer boundaries.

INNER BOUNDARY

- Where we protect the world from our adaptive child (our WHOOSH).
- The inner boundary is also known as the “containing boundary.”

OUTER BOUNDARY

- Where we protect ourselves from the world (other people’s issues or triggers).
- It is our choice to hold these boundaries up or lower them down.