

Catching the Bullet

Two Kinds of Bullets:

- Reactive – stage 1 – secondary, blaming, critical, individual as the problem
- Mistrust – stage 2 – “enemy becomes the stranger”, may be soft criticism, may be reactive, underlying aspect of new information coming forward, confusion/mistrust

Options for Handling:

- Politely blocking the bullet – interrupt the person, apologetically. “Going to stay right here for just a moment. Is that ok? Thank you.”
- Closed validation of reactive person –
 - Simple – “I want to know more about that; I will come back to that in a moment.”
 - More depth
 - Acknowledge something happened, validate reactive person, close/contain – “I can see this is very hard for you, and I want to hear what you are experiencing. Please bear with me; I will check-in with you in just a moment”;
 - Return to activated person to explore with curiosity
 - Return to first person – “Thank you for your patience. I really appreciate how hard this is for you, too. Tell me what is happening.”
- Open validation with containment of first person:
 - Quickly reframe what was said, making sense of reactivity, reframing as mistrust – “I get you never heard this before, part of you doesn’t know what to do, part of you wants to know more...”
 - Return to first individual to validate and ensure secure – “Thank you for sharing how you are feeling. Can you hold for just a moment so I can explore what happened right there with your partner?”
 - Return to reactive person and lean in. “Am I getting that right? You never heard this before? Tell me what happened right there when you heard him/her say ... “
- Contain person working with and move into reactivity:
 - “Excuse me one moment, I want to just check-in on what just happened there, thank you ...”
 - To partner – “help me understand what happened to you when he/she said ...“
- Reframe in terms of attachment – “your partner matters so much to you, it is frustrating to hear that he/she feels this hurt and pain and that you may be contributing to their pain. Am I getting that right?”
- Parts Talk
 - Slowing it down – “let me see if what I think I saw fits – there is a part of you that would love to believe that they really do care for you, that you really are that important to them, and there is another part of you that this just does not fit your experience. Am I getting that right?”
- Use our Self as responding individual:

- Give a response to the person who is being vulnerable, ensure attunement/validation - "I really appreciate you took a risk right there, and I appreciate how hard that was for you to say, especially because you know it might trigger him/her. Thank you."
- Turn to reactive person to explore - "Tell me about what happened right there for you when he/she said..." (Cycle happening in the moment)
- Reality Check – did they hear what was actually said – giving permission for not hearing (Thanks, Kenny!)
- Go up and organize:
 - "You guys don't know how to do this, you are both stuck, saying things differently and saying the same thing"
 - Organizing the cycle and giving permission for not knowing – join them together in both not knowing how to do it differently (step 4)

Other comments:

- Open and closed validation – will heighten – stay on course
- All behaviors/emotions make sense – helps keep an open space for "catching bullets". Our task is to make sense of reactions/mistrust
- Let withdrawers bullets go longer – any reaction/response from them can lead to assertiveness that they haven't expressed before (thanks, George!)
- Be explicit about your process – it will go a long way in helping de-escalate and help with the bullets.

*Compilation developed by
Karen E. Giunta, LMFT, LLC*

Gleaned from assisting at EFT Trainings with EFT Trainers George Faller, LMFT and Kenny Sanderfer, LMFT, and Certified EFT Supervisor Ryan Rana, PHD, and numerous others in our EFT community along the way☺

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