

### 3 Toxic Communication Styles To Avoid

Apply these communication practices to your relationship and immediately witness greater connection, love and intimacy unfold. Repeating the same old patterns will only result in more of the same, so why not try something different? All that's required of you is the commitment to create small daily changes to the ways you communicate to your partner. A healthy relationship is like a flourishing, wild garden. Tend to it lovingly and see what grows!

#### What is toxic communication?

Communication styles that make either person feel disempowered, belittled, disrespected or unimportant. These 'relationship killers' destroy connection and intimacy, exactly the opposite to what a healthy relationship craves to build a solid foundation for your flourishing garden to grow. Let's explore three of these toxic roadblocks below.

#### Blaming

Blaming is delivered as an accusation and it is often delivered with contempt – such as sarcasm, mocking or cynicism. Sentences that begin with 'you always...' or 'you never...' or 'you did...' are all examples of blaming.

Blaming communication is when you imply that another is to blame for the issue at hand; blaming someone for something is assigning responsibility for a fault or a wrong. In intimate relationships it is often associated with score-keeping or overt assigning of fault instead of taking responsibility and ownership and expressing actual feelings and needs.

In intimate relationships 'blaming' generally creates immediate conflict; breaking down connection, safety and trust.

Some of the strategies I teach to remove blame from your communication include:

- Accept responsibility for some parts of the situation ('it takes two to tango!')
- Use 'I...' statements to express your feelings and needs

#### Shaming

There are many different ways we can shame others including sarcasm, name-calling, expressing disgust, and eye-rolling.

Shaming is often used as an attempt to control others and to feel superior when we wish someone would be or act differently. This relationship killer removes the need to take responsibility for our feelings or communicate consciously. Often, it's used to teach others the lessons we think they should learn instead of communicating our honest feelings and needs.

Someone experiencing shame often feels embarrassed, broken, worthless, disgusting or not-enough. When shaming is used in intimate relationships it erodes trust, connection, safety and respect; it is highly damaging.

Some of the strategies I teach to remove shaming from your communication include:

- Pause before you communicate
- Practice checking-in with your 'words' before speaking them; especially in times when you feel dysregulated, disgust, anger or hurt
- Cultivate empathy and tune into feeling how painful it is to hear shaming words

### Criticising

Criticism is delivered as an expression of disapproval of someone or something on the basis of perceived faults or mistakes. 'You are so lazy' is an example of criticism.

Criticism refers to attacking a person's character or personality rather than discussing the behaviour itself or how it makes you feel. This 'relationship killer' is often the first negative behaviour that is typically used by couples in conflict. In intimate relationships criticism often creates immediate conflict; breaking down connection and eroding safety and trust.

Some of the strategies I teach to remove criticism from your communication include using 'I...' statements to express your feelings, for example:

- 'I feel frustrated when you don't help out around the house,' or
  - 'I feel frustrated when I feel like I'm the only one doing the housework'
- ⇒ Both of these examples target the problem behaviour without criticising

Finding understanding and utilising my communication tools to identify and adapt 'relationship killers' such as blaming, shaming and criticising is a crucial step in developing healthy and supportive communication - using 'I statements...' to express your feelings and needs - shifting language to target the problem behaviour without putting the other person down. Using these two strategies together will move you from statements such as 'you're so lazy' to "I feel frustrated when I'm the only one doing the housework".

I'm passionate about helping you to create loved up intimate relationships. Let me guide you to a flourishing garden that nurtures connection and joy.

Sending loved up vibes out to you!

Chalisa.