

Relationship Rules 101, ALL relationships

1. First one there gets dibs, has the floor. That means the listener just listens. They don't explain *anything*. They don't say, "Well you do it too." They hold space (explaining why I did or didn't do it or what I was thinking is NOT holding space). If you are expanding as a being you will actually put all your energy towards understanding what they mean, and where they are coming from. None of your energy will be focused on what you are going to say back, or why they are wrong. If you have a similar concern (this often is the case) then you can initiate a conversation at a different time (not now!), and then you will get dibs and they will have to listen to you.
2. Do not bring anyone else into it. "I do not like the way I was treated last night (so far so good), and Dave and Carol mentioned it too, or the kids think so too..." (no!). If you are a whole person it will be enough to state your own feelings. When you think you need to bring in others for backup it is because your "tree roots" are not rooted firmly and you don't feel, to the core, that you have the right to your feelings. It also has the side effect of helping the other person feel ganged up on, and therefore possibly more defensive.
3. I only broadcast information about myself. Example: You and I go to the movies every Tuesday because it's \$5 movie night. I love the previews so I get there early. I usually buy both tickets. You are late every single time (literally), and you never pay me back (not one time) the \$5. Clearly you are in the wrong on this one, do you agree? Here's how I'm going to say it. "Hey friend, I love going to the movies together. And I notice that I often (see how I didn't say always!) end up waiting for your arrival, and end up missing the previews. I also don't usually (see how I didn't say every time!) get paid back for the ticket. If I'm honest, this hurts my feelings a little bit, and well, it worries me that maybe the friendship is more important to me." Broadcasting info only about self takes skills and guts. It takes practice to learn how to only speak of ourselves instead of saying you, you, you. And it takes guts because it is much more vulnerable to share something about my insides instead of just pointing out your growth areas.
4. Do not, ever, threaten to break up, leave, call it quits unless you are 100% packed and ready to go. Crying wolf that you are calling it quits is very threatening to the other person and could very much ensure that they will have their guard even more up in the future. Threatening to leave is not ok.



5. This last one is a tough one, straight from The Four Agreements: Don't take anything personally. If I come home in a terrible mood and am storming around and slamming things is that acceptable; no. But do you need to take it personally; also no. You can take up your own space, respond in an appropriate way (about yourself and what you do and don't put up with), and even if the other person's actions are harmful (and might not feel that great) you still have a choice to take them personally or not. No one else is qualified to tell me how to feel about myself.