

Rebuilding Trust: The Loving Salve for Relational Betrayal or Other Relational Injury

by Paul J. Scoglio

Use the following script if the subject of a past relational injury is referred to by a partner, spouse, child or friend. This script assumes that you manage yourself well and demonstrate Level Two* listening skills. If at any time you drop into Level One*, then you will have lost any healing momentum in the conversation. Staying with the injured party's agenda for minutes can save years of relational grief for both parties.

1. **Reflective listening, the first part of Level Two listening:** Repeat what the injured party has said. For example, "So you are thinking about the incident that happened five years ago and you are wondering if the hang-up phone call the night before, had anything to do with it. Have I got that right?"

The injured party will acknowledge that you have heard the concern correctly or will qualify and restate his/her concern. **Repeat this step until you are told that you have heard it correctly.**

2. **Summary of understanding, the second part of Level Two listening:** After repeating what was said as close to verbatim as possible (to convey a sense of hearing and listening) then clarify your understanding by summarizing. For example, "So what you mean is...?"
3. **Curiosity, the third part of Level Two listening:** Ask questions if you do not understand something completely. Ask, "When you say ". . ." you mean what?" Or simply ask, "Is there more you want to tell me about this?"
4. **Statements of recommitment and intention:** Once you have successfully acknowledged that you have heard about the injury and pain (It is always about pain or it would not be mentioned.) then it is time to make statements that affirm your recommitment and intention to act differently from this time forward.
 - A. You say, "I love you." If there was a question asked then you also answer the question as best you can.
 - B. Next you say, "I am sorry that happened."
 - C. Then you say, "I wish that never happened."
 - D. And you say, "I would never want that to happen again." Or you say, "I would never want to put you through that again."
 - E. Then again you say, "I love you."

These statements along with your listening at Level Two are the ingredients for healing when trust is lost in a relationship.

5. **Openness to continuing the discussion:** Return to listening at Level Two: You ask, "Is there anything else you want to say about that?"

Integrity: If there is more to be said about the incident then you **must** go back to **item 1** and start through the list of five steps again. You must keep repeating this process until the subject or subjects are all talked out. Your partner will welcome the script even if you read it from this page. This is a healing process. This is a script for communicating love and demonstrating the capacity to witness healing in another. The only way this will work is if all of these statements are true for you. If you feel you have to lie in this process then **do not** initiate this process. It will be extremely destructive and function as relationship **poison** rather than healing medicine.

The Reason for this exercise. *Living in the past restricts living in the present. It only makes sense to revisit past injuries within the process of healing. Healing allows you to leave the past behind. The healing process requires a safe time and place to process and move beyond hurts, fears, anger and resentment. By using this script you will create the safe time and safe place necessary for healing.*

Perspective: *For some it may appear that a partner revisits the past out of vengeance. This is a mistake in perception. The fact is they are compelled to do so, in search of healing and freedom from the pain of past injury. Seeing this process differently requires a perspective change on the part of the person who acted in a way that created the injury.*

*** Listening levels are discussed and practiced in relationship coaching sessions. Remember...**

Level One is all about you. No matter what you hear, you think about the words in terms of yourself and this is not helpful.

Level Two is all about the other person. No matter what they say, you stay focused on them, focused on the meaning for them of the words they speak, focused on being curious about the feelings and experience they have or are speaking about. This is very helpful!

Learning to listen at Level 2 is like learning to ride a bicycle. It takes coaching and practice. *The Coaches Training Institute in San Rafael, California developed the Three Levels of Listening. As a result many coaches now teach these fundamentals for living well.*

Summary Script

1. *Reflective listening, Level Two listening*
2. *Summary of understanding*
3. *Curiosity*
4. *Statements of recommitment and intention*
 - A. *Say, "I love you." And answer the question if any.*
 - B. *Next say, "I am sorry that happened."*
 - C. *Then say, "I wish that never happened."*
 - D. *And say, "I would never want that to happen again."
or "I would never want to put you through that again."*
 - E. *Then again say, "I love you."*
5. *Stay open to continuing the discussion.*

Paul J. Scoglio 978-921-8400

*Paul J. Scoglio, MSW, LICSW
Scoglio Coaching and Counseling
900 Cummings Center, Suite 417U
Beverly, MA 01915
978.921.8400
www.paulscoglio.com
paul@paulscoglio.com*

Version 12 May 24, 2010