

Five Losing Strategies and Five Winning Strategies

[From Terrence Real – “The New Rules of Marriage © 2007]

When we're talking to another person and emotions start to ramp up, one of the most important questions to ask yourself is “Which part of me is talking?”

Is it the mature, present-based part (associated with the pre-frontal cortex) which wants a solution, or the immature child part (associated with the limbic system) which wants to be proven right, control my partner, vent frustration or anger, and is coming from a place of contempt and self-righteousness?

The kindest and most respectful thing you can do for yourself and your partner is to learn to recognize when you're in a reactive (immature child) state of mind and take a moment.

“Pause-Think-Breathe-Choose” before saying or doing anything. This is how you can access the five winning strategies in a state of relational mindfulness.

Five Losing Strategies:

1. Being right
2. Controlling your partner
3. Unbridled self-expression
4. Retaliation
5. Withdrawal

Five Winning Strategies:

1. Going after what you want
2. Speaking for repair
3. Listening with compassion
4. Responding with generosity
5. Cherishing