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Hello, and Happy Sunday, I hope you're having a beautiful day. And I hope you're having a beautiful weekend. Today is Part Two to the video that I made last week about, we have to bring something up that we are pissed about or upset about, we need to tell someone we care about that what they did or said bothered us. How do we do that? Now, this is not intended to be giving you scripts like “here go forth, repeat my words”. But rather, I'll share what I say or what I do that can make conflict go smoother, or that can make it feel more doable to have these conversations if we decide we do want to have them. If any of them feel like they might suit your situation, feel free to use them or adapt them, put them in your voice, otherwise, maybe at the very least, what I do in my life can potentially be a jumping off point for you to brainstorm and troubleshoot what might work for you.

Okay, how many tools did I write down? one two... six. in case you're someone who really likes structure and to know exactly what you're about to expect? Six, I wrote down six things.

TITLECARD: HEADLINE THOUGHT

So I'll start off by how we even ask to have a conversation. One of my favorite go-tos is asking for a talk by first giving a headline thought. A one sentence descriptor of the general thing we're hoping to talk about. Because if I just say “we need to talk,” that freaks everybody out. How could it not, right? Because it casts this vague doom over the conversation, it is too easy for a person to just project their worst fears onto it, come into the conversation just already guarded, already tense, braced for the worst case scenario when it might not be that bad.

If I was really annoyed by something my partner was doing when they go out on dates, I might say, “hey, I want to check in about how dating other people is going”. One sentence headline thought. specific enough to know the focus but not detailed enough to just launch into it right then and there. Now they know it is a check in, that means we've got some news, we've got some emotions or needs. And ideally, it would be a two way street as well. It says the topic is dating. So if that in general tends to be a stressful topic, now they know that and they can sort of prepare themselves for that.

Alternatively, if I had said, “hey, I want to check in about how dating is going because you've been pretty inconsiderate lately, and I'm starting to resent my metamour”. Okay, I mean, it is so specific that it's getting right into the agenda of the talk and

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sharing things that will be difficult to not just respond to or have a reaction to. And hey, if they want to hear it like that, if they're like "just give it to me straight, rip the band aid off, don't talk around the issue." Fair, okay, that can be discussed. Ultimately, the most helpful way to have conflict is decided by the people who are having the conflict, right. But for a lot of people this brief request ahead of actually getting into the details, that gives them the chance to actually think about and agree to the discussion. And not only does it give them a better idea of what you want to talk about, but it gives them the chance to let you know if they have the bandwidth right now to talk about it. And so if the confrontation is not an emergency, then this tool can give breathing room to mutually agree upon the best time and place.

TITLECARD: LOGISTICS

Which brings me to a question of logistics: when, where and in what format? it can seem like a no-brainer, but it is shocking how easy it is to forget in the heat of the moment, how much time and place matter, how much those things can change how the conversation even goes.

Because if you tell them you're pissed off right before they go into a work meeting, is that potentially a shitty thing to do to them? are they now stewing for an hour, distracted, getting annoyed by it? So when they come back out, now both of you are mad, which can make calming down and getting back on the same page that much more of an effort. In general, I like to ask most of my close relationships, "If I ever have something hard to bring up. Do you have a preference of how or when I say that?" like, "Oh, yes, I much prefer it in person. I don't do great over text". Good to know. or "Yeah, for timing, definitely it can't be before I've eaten, because I'm so much more agitated when I'm hungry". Awesome. That is really helpful for me to keep in mind.

But please don't misunderstand. It is not about making a bunch of tiny rules for how you must say things. Please do not hear that. Because that's not what I'm trying to say, that sounds awful. It's more about knowing what simple logistical things in general can raise or lower stress for each other. So now I know if I do decide to bring something up in text before they've eaten, I understand exactly what I'm doing. I know this is about to be a bumpier version of this talk because they already told me that those things make it harder for them.

But yeah, it varies a lot from person to person. It can even vary from relationship to relationship. Like "I don't mind when you talk to me that way, but I get real reactive when they talk to me that way". Totally fair. So it is not just tailor made to each individual's experience, but also each relationship dynamic, of what feels better, what feels worse. And if you or they don't know the best way to go about things, you can

also just kind of see how it goes to some extent, and do some trial and error. that can be riskier like, “well, let's roll the dice, it could go bad, we have less information”. And also that can be how we learn what works for us, is by experiencing it not going great, and then asking for them to do it differently next time. So if we can know things like that in advance, we can at least prevent, hopefully, adding unnecessary stress to the conversation.

TITLECARD: WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Speaking of knowing things in advance, can we be clear – at least with ourselves, but hopefully with them too – on the point of the conversation? why are we bringing this up? What are we hoping to have happen next? What outcome or response would be ideal to come out of this conversation?

Are we just wanting to be heard without interruption? Like, “please, I just need to vent, I just need you to hear this. Please don't defend yourself. I don't want to hear excuses. I'm gonna get more mad if the conversation goes in that direction”. Right? Can we know that? venting and being heard and just taking up space, that is a goal. Or maybe we're hoping they'll agree to something. “Can you do this more? Can you stop doing that?” Or it could also be that we don't really know the solution at all. We just have a problem, we want to come to them to brainstorm. And we're hoping that this will be a problem solving discussion. “I'm upset, can we come up with solutions together?”

So those are three kind of different directions that the same confrontation could go. and I see a lot of conflict go off the rails, when people are not on the same page of the goal of the conversation. So if possible, I really try to know that upfront, and then say it upfront.

But, if after the first topic feels acknowledged – like “I said I want to be heard, and now I feel like I've been heard. I wanted to take up space and now space hasn't been took” – and everybody feels like they took it seriously and discussed it with us, they weren't just waiting for us to be done talking, that's an important one. If after that, then they would like to shift the conversation and switch gears. The talk can evolve. Of course it can. like if they said “hey, I really know you needed to vent before and I get that and I did not mind hearing that out. I do have some frustrations of my own. Are you willing to hear me out now too?”

Giving separate space to separate goals? Even if the distance between those two things is like three minutes. I'm not talking about “Oh, wait a week before you can be

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heard". can we each have the floor at some point, and can we agree on that? And can we stay teammates and working towards a resolution?

TITLECARD: SAME TEAM REMINDERS

Which is a great segue to my next tool, which is: same team reminders. simple, short and sweet one. literally reminding each other that we're in this together. Like I literally will say, "Okay, wait wait, we're both heated, pause, take a breath, same team", and then they will also come back to center. "Same team."

If pausing and saying "same team", if that is not your vibe, sometimes people will have timeout signals, tap out signals, they might use safe words, if things are getting elevated. just any way that you hopefully agree on up front, so that you're not trying to negotiate that in the heat of the moment. Any way to say "I need to clear my head, I'm losing the plot", right? Like "I'm getting all whipped up. And I don't think this is going in a great direction. Can we hit pause?"

And sometimes it's literally going out for five minutes and taking a breather. I might go for a walk, I might take a shower to help the reset, I might sit for 20 minutes in the dark because I'm overstimulated and need to decompress, you know. So we can use the time of a pause, wisely. If we know ourselves, we know what calms us down, we can use that time to actually get into a place again, where we feel like we can come back into the conversation fresh. Anything that can get us back to coming to teammates.

Sometimes, like I said, it can last for minutes or hours. If it's an important conversation, I try not to go days or weeks before picking up the conversation again, because then it can lose steam, or just settle in as a resentment that I never brought up, but it's still there. But plenty of people do agree on longer term pauses on heavy talks. Like maybe they're overwhelmed and it's school exams, and they're like, "no time this week is going to be good for me", right? And so that can be agreed on. or maybe they just gave birth, and they're like, "I need a few weeks of rest. Because this has been a lot". Sure. I think regardless of the utility of a pause, or the duration of it, I think the most important thing is that you do pick the conversation back up at some point. And ideally, you are both on the same page of when that will be.

TITLECARD: AVOIDING LANDMINES

A great way to avoid even needing a pause in the first place, though, is being clear on where the landmines are. And by that I mean, sensitivities, trigger points, things that remind them of their shitty ex or their abusive parent, you know what I mean? Can

we know, again, what might make this worse? and equip each other with that info if possible.

And the nice thing about that is that if it has been an explicit conversation, and then they still do it, that's good to know. like, if I tell you, "hey, it really sets off alarm bells in my body when doors are being slammed during an argument". And they know that, and then they slam a door during an argument. Now, I know "you did that on purpose, that was not an accident." or at the very least if they did it in their own reactivity, do they immediately come back and say, "I'm so sorry, I know what that means"? Or do they just didn't double down or act like it wasn't a big deal, or they didn't know about it, You know? either way, the more that we know that the other person knows what our pain points are, the more obvious it will be if they are or are not respecting those.

But also it's not just about trying to avoid hurting the other person. It's absolutely about that, right? We don't, even if we are hurting, we don't want to double down on the pain and say, "Well, you broke my arm, now I'm breaking your arm. Now we both have two broken arms, nobody's healed", I mean, I'm not trying to add to the things we now have to heal, if possible. But the volume of the voice or the messiness of the reactivity has no bearing on the validity of the argument. We are not mistaking form for substance, right? We are thoughtful about form if we can be, and, if form completely goes out the window, the substance at the end of the day is what really matters.

So it's always so tough, because when I offer communication tools, in general, it tends to be prompts for self exploration. But so many people say that their partner or their ex or their friend in a catty way, sends my video to them, to tell them what to do. So if anyone does that, can you show them this excerpt of the video? Don't do that. Genevieve says bad. I'm a fucking relationship anarchist, I'm not trying to have my words be used to bully people into behaving a certain way. No, no, no, no, do not cosign. Don't agree.

TITLECARD: EXIT PLAN

So I have one more tool, the last I'll offer today. I alluded to this a little bit before, or actually a little bit in part one, I mean. Can we know our exit plan? I can't tell you how many times that I've been in a conflict. And I was so glad that Earlier Me thought about what I'm going to do next, right after the conflict. If it was a conflict I decided to bring up, I had forethought about. if I'm doing all of that, can I also think about coming out of that conflict? What happens right after we are done talking?

In extreme cases, this could literally be an escape plan, right? Like if things go terribly, and you gotta pull the ripcord and get the hell out of there, Do you have a ride home? Can you get away from this quickly and comfortably?

But I also mean, even for small stuff, even for stuff that you're not even really that worried about. It's only like a two out of 10 stress level or a five out of 10 stress level, I still like to have a plan in mind to change the location or the activity right after we're done. Are we having a hard talk on the sofa? Let's move to the kitchen afterwards. We're having a hard talk at a cafe? let's get up and go for a walk when we've reached a conclusion. It can be easier to wrap things up and to feel resolution, if we literally change what we're doing next. we can change our state of mind if we're changing what our body is doing.

And this can be especially helpful if time is limited. If time is scarce. If you have just one night together this whole month, then at some point you might be faced with "well, I need to have a hard conversation and hopefully still have a date night and intimacy and fun, all in the same few hours". So if you said, you know "I'm kind of hurt by what you did, I want to talk about it. Can we meet at home and talk for like an hour, or hour and a half. And then we've got dinner reservations at our favorite place. We've got a hard out time. and regardless of if the conversation feels done or not by then, let's agree to put a pin in it, pick it up later, and the rest of the night we're just going to try and enjoy ourselves."

Now, that can be agreed upon. It doesn't always go to plan. Maybe things get so animated that you're like, "nevermind, we're not going to dinner" or you do go to dinner and you're still bickering throughout it, life is gonna happen. But I think even if the plan is not perfect, or the plan doesn't play out how you hoped, at least there is a plan, right? there's an attempt to make space for work and play. There's an attempt to say, "let's do the hard thing and let's move to a new location to do the hopefully fun thing too." That intentionality, having a plan can increase the chances you get to do both, rather than just hoping that the right time will organically happen during a very narrow timeframe.

There's no guarantee that any amount of thoughtfulness or planning or tact will make you heard the way you hope you're going to be heard, or have the resolution you hope you're going to have. other people are the variable. We don't know what they're going to do. We don't know what work they're willing to do on themselves, if they have the capacity to even look inward and say sorry, or whatever. that remains the wild card. And, all we have control over is what we say and what we do. so if we are trying to do our most thoughtful version of saying and doing what we want to say and do, then at the very least, we can know that we've tried everything to go

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about it in the way that we respect. Like, if I was watching me on a movie screen doing the thing, would I be rooting for her? You know what I mean? trying to step back and be like, "what would a person I respect say, in this moment? What would a person I respect do next?" and that can sometimes also help to realign with your Northstar and find what you think is right or good.

Anyway, try things on, see what works for you. But otherwise, thank you so much for being here. As always, patrons can request topics, but I hope that you're having a great day and a great week, and I will see you next time. Bye.

xxx