

PRACTICING SCALES WITH OUR PARTNER

This month the theme for couples work has emerged. It's about how we become known to each other -- that is, how intimate we are. How well do we share who we are and then negotiate from there? Many of us struggle with disclosing how important things are to us. So this month, I am suggesting a look at the very simple concept of a 1-10 scale.

When expressing yourself to your partner, try expressing how important the issue/event is to you on a 1-10 scale and assist your partner in expressing the same.

For example, if I want to go see the film, *The Incredibles*, and it's a 9 in importance/desire to me, and my wife wants to see *Alexander* (most likely to look at Colin Farrell) and she says it's a 5 for her, then it's pretty easy to agree to see what I want. The goal is to make sure we each know how strong the desire/feeling is for each other.

Let's imagine that I want to go for walk on my day off and I don't communicate that it's a strong 10 for me and she is emphatic about working in the yard. If we don't use a number, I may interpret her intensity of wanting to do yard work as a 10 and not get what I want. It may be that she just really wanted to be outside and a walk would have been fine or we could have made a list of yard work and we could have agreed on another day. Also, if I don't tell her what is important to me, I may end up holding a resentment that I didn't get to do what I wanted.

My goal here is to get you thinking about what you say and don't say and to be sure you both have a clear way of communicating your level of desire so you reduce the number of misunderstandings through this simple scale technique.

Of course, if we have dissimilar desires and they are both the same level of importance, then we have some important communication to complete and negotiation skills come into play in a big way.

That's another E-zine, which I may do later. Suffice it to say that it would have to do with staying in the feelings realm using empathy and compassion to help decide what would best be a win-win for us.

Thanks to those couples this month that helped bring these issues to light.

Sincerely,

Russell

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