

CONVERSATIONS IT'S NOT WORTH HAVING (PART FOUR)

By Marlene and Bob Neufeld

In the May, June and September issues of TONE magazine, we wrote about three of the conversations we recommend people not put energy into; i.e. "Who said what." "Why did you do that?" and "Who is right?" For a copy of those articles go to www.marleneandbob.com/articles.htm.

Another conversation we recommend you avoid if you want to feel closer to your partner and have more fun together is focusing on whether what your partner is saying is accurate or exaggerated.

Many times people in our office get side-tracked into conversations which sound something like this:

Partner one: on Tuesday you ... (e.g. were talking to your mother about me)

Partner two: it wasn't Tuesday, it was Wednesday

Or:

Partner one: you never ... (e.g. put your dishes away after breakfast).

Partner two: Yes, I do, last week on Saturday I not only put them away, I also put yours away.

We invite you to accept that when your partner feels strongly about something he or she will likely be inaccurate and/or exaggerate the facts. Focusing on the inaccuracies or exaggerations is a red herring and results in two frustrated people. Pointing out the inaccuracies or exaggerations won't help you receive your partner's feelings. Instead of jumping in and cutting your partner off in order to respond, it is wonderful if you can hear with your heart and contain your own emotions until your partner is finished. This requires a willingness to sit with your own feelings long enough for your partner to fully express all that he or she is feeling.

You can simply reflect back what you are hearing, e.g. "I hear that when I was talking to my mother about you, you..." or "I hear that you believe that I never put your dishes away after breakfast."

Or, if you find that impossible to do, you can say "I am having trouble hearing what you are saying because I want to point out your exaggeration or inaccuracy, can we start this conversation again?"

There are lots of great conversations that can assist you in feeling closer to each other. Arguing with your partner about inaccuracies or exaggerations isn't one of them. Contact us if you want to know about the kinds of conversations we have found helpful.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving

relationships with one another. To learn more, see www.marleneandbob.com or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session.