

## **Connection – OR – Disconnection? It Is Your Choice** **by Marlene Neufeld**

I have realized that there are usually two main intentions behind any communication:

1. Connecting: wonder, discovery, learning; OR
2. Disconnecting: attacking, defending, making someone right and someone else wrong, justifying my position.

Here's an example of what I mean. Recently, my life-partner Bob was driving me to the airport for a 6 day trip on my own. Bob said something which I had an impulse to argue with. I judged it as inaccurate. In the past I would challenge or correct him.

This time I stopped and asked myself what would my main intention be if I challenged him. I realized that it would be disconnection; i.e. making him wrong. I took a breath and chose not to say anything. This, however, was also a familiar choice. If I just clamped my mouth shut and thought, "he's wrong, but I'm not going to say it", then I would still have the same intent (making him wrong) and would probably get the same result (disconnection).

I know that if I withhold (i.e. hold back a thought or feeling) then I am heading into a familiar sequence of withhold→withdraw→project. When we withhold relevant expressions or completions, then we withdraw energetic connection and participation from the other person, group or the world. From this non-participation place, my view of events becomes distorted, and I generate an inaccurate story/projection or attitude about the person, group or the world. (based on the teachings of Drs. Gay & Kathlyn Hendricks)

So I asked myself why I would be creating this right now. I **got curious** and began to wonder what was underneath my noticing of what Bob said. In other words, I **took responsibility** for my experience and perception. I realized that I was scared about leaving for 6 days. We hadn't been apart for that long for a number of years. I revealed my discovery "I noticed I am scared when I think about not seeing you for the next 6 days" and created connection. At that moment, I totally forgot whatever Bob had said that I had been previously criticizing.

Instead of my old familiar pattern of withhold→withdraw→project, I created a new pattern of noticing my intent→generating curiosity and taking responsibility→revealing authentically. And I left on my journey feeling connected and close to my partner.

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