

Why do people have the kind of conversations we don't recommend having? **By Marlene and Bob Neufeld**

In previous issues of TONE magazine, we wrote about conversations we recommend people not put energy into and conversations we recommend people do put energy into. Today we want to explore what is behind the kinds of conversations people have. So why do people continue to have the kind of conversations that don't actually lead to closeness, intimacy and connection?

- 1. To avoid the unknown:** People feel more secure when they think they know what is going to happen, when they think they know what others think around them. Even though what they think they know may be hurtful, it is often easier to stay with what they know than to open up to the possibility of finding something new. Often, in our office, we hear people saying "I know what you're going to say" and that closes them off to hearing anything new and different.
- 2. To be right (and not wrong):** People get caught in thinking that they need to prove how right they are. After all, if they're not right, they're wrong. Right? NO! Being close to someone is not about being right or wrong, it's about opening up to seeing them in a new way. People get the mistaken idea that if they don't prove they are right, or defend themselves from an accusation that they think is wrong, then it will become locked into reality. This is actually the opposite of what really happens. As in the Shakespearean quote about someone who "**doth protest too much,**" a person's overly frequent or vehement attempts to convince others of something have, ironically, convinced others that the opposite is true, by making the person look insincere and defensive.
- 3. To get a hit of adrenaline; To be entertained:** Many of us are addicted to adrenaline. We mistake that spike of nervous energy for true connection. Our inner Provokers keep us on the drama triangle and we don't know how to simply be in Presence with our partners. For more about this see the article "Uncovering Who We Really Are" on our website.
- 4. To avoid authentic feelings:** Many of us are emotionally illiterate and don't know what to do with the waves of anger, fear and sadness that wash over us in our everyday lives. We use the words "I feel" to legitimate our thoughts and perceptions and are uncomfortable feeling the emotions underneath.

In our next article in this series, we will explore how playing a simple game of "Tossing" can be a metaphor for a good conversation that will open up more communication with your partner.