

# Choosing Peace Practices

## PRACTICING OBSERVATION

[Distinction: Observation Versus Judgment]

### #1: PURE REFLECTION

Reflect back what you heard the other person say, in their words or in your own.

**Partner:** “I just had a meeting with the most unpleasant people.”

You: “OK, you had a meeting with some unpleasant people.”

**Partner:** “Yes! They were horrible. I’ve never met such a negative bunch.”

You: “They were horrible and negative?”

### #2: SEPARATING OBSERVATION FROM JUDGMENT

When reflecting a judgment, qualify with a statement indicating that the judgment is a thought or interpretation, not necessarily the reality.

**Partner:** “He is treating me unfairly.”

You: “Oh, as you see it, he is treating you unfairly?”

**Partner:** “I just had a meeting with the most unpleasant people!”

You: “You had a meeting with group of people that seemed to you to be very unpleasant?”

### #3: GUESSING THE OBSERVATION

Make a guess about what actually happened that is prompting the judgment.

**Partner:** “He is treating me unfairly.”

You: “Do you feel that way because of something he said during the staff meeting?”

**Partner:** “I just had a meeting with the most unpleasant people!”

You: “Were you bothered by how they talked over one another during the meeting?”

### #4: ASKING FOR THE OBSERVATION

Ask what actually happened that is prompting the person to have their judgment.

**Partner:** “He is treating me unfairly.”

You: “What is it that he said or did that is unfair?”

**Partner:** “I just had a meeting with the most unpleasant people!”

You: “What about them did you find unpleasant?”



## PRACTICING FEELINGS

[Distinction: Feelings Versus Faux Feelings]

### #5: TRANSLATING FAUX FEELINGS

When you hear someone use a judgment disguised as a feeling (such as abandoned, betrayed, etc.), guess what he or she might be feeling (angry, upset, hurt, etc.).

**Partner:** "I feel criticized."

You: "When you say that, are you feeling angry?"

**Partner:** "I'm being harassed at work."

You: "Are you frightened about how you are being treated?"

### #6: TRANSLATING IMAGES

When someone uses an image that leaves you unclear what they are feeling, make a guess about what they are feeling.

**Partner:** "I feel like a comic bombing during a standup routine."

You: "Are you saying that you are feeling embarrassed?"

**Partner:** "I feel like a child lost in the woods."

You: "When you say that, are you feeling scared and lonely?"

### #7: TRANSLATING THOUGHTS

When you hear "I feel like..." or "I feel that..." what follows is a thought, not a feeling. Guess what the person might be feeling.

**Partner:** "I feel like he does not understand me."

You: "Are you distressed about this?"

**Partner:** "I feel that they really don't appreciate me at work."

You: "When you say that, do you feel discouraged?"

## PRACTICING NEEDS

[Distinction: Needs Versus Strategies]

### #8: DISCONNECTING NEEDS FROM A PERSON

If it sounds like a person's strategy is tied up in a particular person doing something, you can guess what need they might be hoping to meet.

**Partner:** "The kids should really pick up after themselves."

You: "Is it cleanliness that is important to you, or is it more about consideration?"

**Partner:** "I need her to respect me."

You: "So respect is the key thing for you in this situation?"

### #9: DISCONNECTING NEEDS FROM PLACES

If it sounds like a person's strategy is tied up in a particular place, you might guess what need they might be hoping to meet by being in that place.

**Partner:** "I need to be at my office."

You: "Would being at the office help you focus?"

**Partner:** "I have to go to my friend's party."

You: "Are you looking forward to the connection and community?"

### #10: DISCONNECTING NEEDS FROM THINGS

If it sounds like a person's strategy is tied up in having something, such as a particular object, house, job, or amount of money, you can guess what need they might be hoping to meet in getting it.

**Partner:** "I need a car."

You: "Would having the car give you freedom to move around?"

**Partner:** "I really can't lose this job right now!"

You: "Is it the structure and predictability, or being able to take care of your family?"

### #11: DISCONNECTING NEEDS FROM TIME

If it sounds like a person's strategy is tied up in being somewhere on time or achieving a goal in a particular time frame, you might guess what need they are hoping might be met if things happen in the time frame they want.

**Partner:** "I have to be there on time."

You: "Is it important to you to be on time so you can keep your agreements?"

**Partner:** "I needed to get this report done yesterday!"

You: "When you say that, do you want to meet your need for reliability?"

## PRACTICING REQUESTS

[Distinction: Requests Versus Demands]

### #12: MAKING PRESENT-TENSE REQUESTS

Requests are always made in present tense, even if they are about something in the future—the act of agreement is now, and we can help ourselves and others be clear that our requests are present intentions.

**Partner:** “When my coworker gets upset and yells, I’d like to be less reactive.”

You: “How can you imagine reminding yourself to do that the next time your coworker reacts like that?”

*Partner’s example agreement with herself:* “Am I willing to remind myself each time I am meeting with this coworker that if he starts to get upset I will inhale three times before I respond in any way.”

**Partner:** “I’m tired of her being late to work. She should be here on time!”

You: “Do you want to have another conversation in which she confirms her understanding about arriving at work at the agreed upon time?”

*Partner’s example request:* “Co worker, would you meet with me after the team meeting today to talk about your getting to work at the agreed upon time?”

### #13: MAKING POSITIVE REQUESTS

Requests are framed in terms of what you want, not what you don’t want. If you hear someone stating what they don’t want, you can support them to turn their request into a positive statement of what they would like instead.

**Partner:** “I want him to stop leaving his clothes everywhere.”

You: “So you would like him to put away his clothes at the end of each day?”

*Partner’s example request:* “When you take your clothes off in our home, would you be willing to either put them in the dirty clothes hamper or hang them in your closet?”

**Partner:** “She shouldn’t be focusing so much on what is wrong all the time.”

You: “Would you like her to express what she is dissatisfied about in a way that is easier for you to hear?”

*Partner’s example request:* “When you tell me about something you are dissatisfied with, would it be OK with you to tell me the specific things that were said and done that you are displeased with?”

#### #14: MAKING REQUESTS IN ACTION LANGUAGE

Requests are doable, concrete, and behavioral, and in most cases all parties can reasonably be able to tell whether the request has been fulfilled or not. If someone states a request that is general or not doable, you might either guess what they might want that is specific and concrete, or ask them for more information.

**Partner:** “I wish he would show me that he loves me.”

You: “What might he do that would meet your need for love?”

*Partner’s example request:* “When you come home would you sit with me on the couch and tell me about your day?”

**Partner:** “I’d like them to appreciate all that I do at work.”

You: “Would appreciation in this case mean being told regularly what you are doing that is making a valuable contribution?”

*Partner’s example request to a work colleague:* “Do you like my contribution to the project we just completed?”

#### #15: CONFIRMING THE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED

This type of Connection Request ascertains whether the message sent is the same as the message received.

If you’ve been talking and want to check that the other person is hearing what you want them to hear, ask, “Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say?”

If the other person has been talking and you want to check that you are understanding them as they want to be understood, ask, “Are you willing to pause for me to make sure I’m hearing you the way you want me to?”

#### #16: TESTING THE QUALITY OF YOUR CONNECTION

This type of Connection Request attempts to take a measurement of how connected the other person is with what we are saying.

If we have been talking and want to check how connected the other person is, we can ask in various ways, such as:

- “How do you feel hearing what I just said?”
- “How is it for you that...”
- “What’s your reaction to...?”
- “What do you think about what I’ve said?”

If the other person has been speaking we can also let them know what's going on for us by saying something like:

- “I’m feeling skeptical when I hear that...”
- “I feel happy hearing you say that....”

### **#17: MAKING SOLUTION REQUESTS**

Solution Requests are requests about what we would like to have happen in the world that we hope will meet our needs. Solution requests fit the components of a request: they are present tense, positive, in action language, and are a request instead of a demand.