

APPENDIX-F:

The Relationship Game

The Relationship Game is a realistic way to reconnect with someone that we have been disconnected from for years, no matter who disconnected from whom. It is also a realistic way to reconnect with someone that we have been disconnected from for days. Once reconnected, the relationship game provides a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge others and share their love. However, all of this comes at a price—it is emotionally frightening to play this game the first time—but once played you'll wish you'd played it all of your life. Please read this entire procedure before scheduling a game.

Game Definitions:

Rules Keeper: The player in charge of the game to make sure that everyone abides by the rules. The rules keeper changes each time you play the game, giving every player a turn at it, especially the very young.

Speaking Player: the player bringing forth an issue or acknowledgement.

Listening Player: the player receiving the issue or acknowledgement.

Issues: something that you did that invalidated another player or that another player did that invalidated you.

Issues Worksheet: where you write down the issues, you have with up to three players. Make many copies of page E-6 to hand out.

Feelings for Issues: how you felt when another player invalidated and disconnected from you—on the right side of the *Issues Worksheet*.

Acknowledgements: of something that another person does that you admire him or her for or something that brings you great joy when you think about it (i.e., makes you feel love for them).

Acknowledgement Worksheet: where you write down the acknowledgements, you have for up to three players. Make many copies of page E-8 to hand out.

Feelings for Acknowledgements: how you feel when you think about what you are acknowledging another player for—on the right side of the *Acknowledgements Worksheet*.

Request Sheet: used by one player to make a request of another player. The request is usually something one player wants another player to do, or not to do, between this and the next scheduled game. Make a few copies of page E-8, cut them out and have them available.

Objects of the Game:

- To allow a speaking player to tell a listening player how he or she feels without interruption or rationalization on the part of the listening player.
- To reconnect with those you have disconnected from, due to an issue that you have with them (they did something to upset you).

- To reconnect with those who have disconnected from you, due to an issue that they have with you (you did something to upset them).
- To acknowledge others for what they do well or just for the wonderful person that they are.

The Players (three to six total players is ideal):

- All family members if played at home.
- All immediate coworkers if played at work.
- Just those involved if played among friends.

How Often Played:

- Play the game weekly for the first two to four consecutive weeks.
- After that, play the game monthly, for example, the first Sunday of the month if at home or the first Friday of the month if at work (people are happier and more open when going into the weekend).
- If not played monthly or on a particular schedule, play as you feel the need—which will be obvious because it will nag at you.

Game Environment:

- Play in any place where *all* players feel emotionally safe and comfortable; all must positively agree and desire to play in that location—this may not be easy.
- If at home, play in the living room or family room—kitchen?
- If at work, play in a conference or break room where all feel comfortable, hopefully without any interruptions (turn off all phones/beepers).
- If done among friends, do it at a mutually convenient, emotionally comfortable location.

The Arrangement of Players:

- Sit on chairs, all at the same eye level, in a tight circle.
- All players should be physically comfortable.

Game Rules—very important!

The Rules Keeper reads the five rules below to all first time players and gets each player to agree to follow the rules:

1. ONLY the speaking player may speak; others should pay attention to what the speaker says and not talk in the background.
2. As a speaking player, maintain eye contact with, and speak only to, the listening player.
3. As a speaking player, do not hedge or downplay your issue; just make direct, succinct statements.
4. As a listening player, do not speak or divert attention away from the speaking player, just focus on what he or she is saying.
5. As a listening player, do not use self-righteous justification to distract yourself from listening—you can't listen if you're rationalizing.

Preparing for Play:

1. In private (not in a circle), complete your *Issues Worksheet* and an *Acknowledgements Worksheet* **on every other player** by writing the player's name on the top of the sheet; also write your name on a sheet. If you have, no issues with a player enter "no issues," including

yourself if you have no integrity issues with yourself. It is important though, to fill in at least one acknowledgement for each player and for yourself.

2. If you have many issues with another player, just list two or three important issues; you can resolve minor issues at subsequent games.
3. When writing issues, make sure that you mention how you *felt* when the disconnection occurred—it is better to use your own words, but if not sure, there are example feeling on the worksheet.
4. Make sure that you mention how you *feel* when writing an acknowledgment about another player—again, it is better to use your own words, but if not sure, there are example feeling words on the worksheet.
5. When all have completed the preparation, comfortably sit in a circle.
6. At the beginning of play, the Rules Keeper asks each player whether he or she feels comfortable with playing today. If not comfortable, determine why and resolve it before playing—do whatever works.

During the Play:

- The Rules Keeper (going clockwise around the circle) asks the first person (the speaking player) to state one issue that he or she has with another player.
- As a speaking player you must succinctly describe the place and time of a specific issue or succinctly describes the most recent reoccurring issue, noting the feelings evoked in you when it occurred.
- As a listening player, you must appreciate how the speaking player felt and never use rationalization to negate those feelings—you can't because those feeling exist whether you like it or not. This is not about the listening player, it's about the speaking player's need to "get it out and get past it."
- When the speaking player has delivered his or her one issue, the listening player simply says, "I understand," or "OK" or "I apologize" or whatever feels comfortable—the listening player does NOT belittle the importance of the issue—there are no small issues!
- When done with the first speaking player and issue, the Rules Keeper asks the next player around the circle to deliver an issue; this is continued until every player has delivered *one* issue to *one* player.
- Go around the circle again with each player bringing forth an issue with another player (or the same one as the first time). Go around the circle again and again until all issues, along with their accompanying feelings are brought forth. Don't forget the issues you have with yourself and how it makes you feel.
- REMEMBER: NO hedging, NO rationalization and NO interruptions of any kind when someone is bringing forth an issue.
- The Rules Keeper keeps the game moving along by interrupting the players when they circumvent the rules and to get them back on track.

Requests:

- You ("BY") use the *Request Sheet* to make a request "OF" another player, which they can either accept or reject.
- The request is to do or not do something between now and the next game, typically anything that would help avoid a reoccurring issue.
- Write down your request and give it to the Rules Keeper to keep in a request file (envelope, etc.). If needed, a copy is given to the person accepting the request.

- The next time the game is played, the Rules Keeper first reads the requests and asks the player accepting the request if it has been fulfilled. If not, a second request can be made and rejected or accepted until the next game. A player may make the same request twice—if not fulfilled by then it never will be.

Ending the Game:

- Take a short break before the acknowledgement part of the game and look over your planned acknowledgements.
- Reseat yourself comfortably in the circle in the same chairs as before. Before restarting, make sure that you have one acknowledgement for each player, including one for yourself.
- Start with the first person clockwise in the circle bringing forth their acknowledgement for *one* listening player; any player will do.
- The speaking player joyfully expresses the acknowledgement.
- The acknowledged listening player gives a simple “thank you” to the speaking player for their kind acknowledgements and never qualifies, belittles or embellishes on the acknowledgement, which would invalidate the speaking player—only the speaking player’s opinion counts.
- When done with the first speaking player, move around the circle in a clockwise rotation until each player has given an acknowledgement to *one* other player.
- Continue around the circle again and again until every player has acknowledged every other player with the acknowledged player graciously accepting the acknowledgement.
- Go around the circle once more and have each player acknowledge him or herself for something they are proud of.
- When done the Rules Keeper declares the game over, congratulates all for their issues and acknowledgements.
- Complete the game with something pleasant, for example, lunch at work or some treat at home or with friends.

The WINNERS:

All players are winners! They resolved their issues, reconnected, acknowledged others, and others have acknowledged them.

Short Version

Once reconnected it is important to be aware of future *spontaneous* disconnection, especially reoccurring emotional issues that are difficult to resolve. When disconnected, it produces sorrow in us, in another, or in both. When *both* feel the sorrow, it's easy to reconnect. When *we* feel the sorrow and avoid rationalization, we can allow ourselves to reconnect, if the other person is aware of the disconnection. When the other person feels the sorrow and we don't, it is more difficult to reconnect (typically because we have some other emotion in place blocking the sorrow), but we still must try to be aware of the need to feel sorrow and to try to reconnect.

If you are automatically aware (you feel sorrow) or if the person makes you aware, you can reconnect immediately by apologizing for the invalidation, etc., and by acknowledging them. For example, if they give their opinion on a situation and you immediately invalidate it, you can apologize for the outburst and discuss the merits of their opinion. And once you validated their opinion, you may find a combined opinion that is more appropriate than the separate opinions.

If another invalidates you, you can reconnect immediately by making them aware of their invalidation and how it made you feel. For example, if you gave your opinion on a situation and it was immediately invalidated, you can: stop, look the invalidating person in the eye and say something like "My opinion may not be perfect, but it has some merit and I feel *demeaned* by your put down. And once said the other person has the choice to immediately apologize, bring out its value and reconnect or can choose not to do so, requiring playing The Relationship Game in the near future to settle this issue.

See page E-6 for the "Issues Sheet"

See page E-7 for the "Acknowledgement Sheet"

See page E-8 for the "Request Sheets"

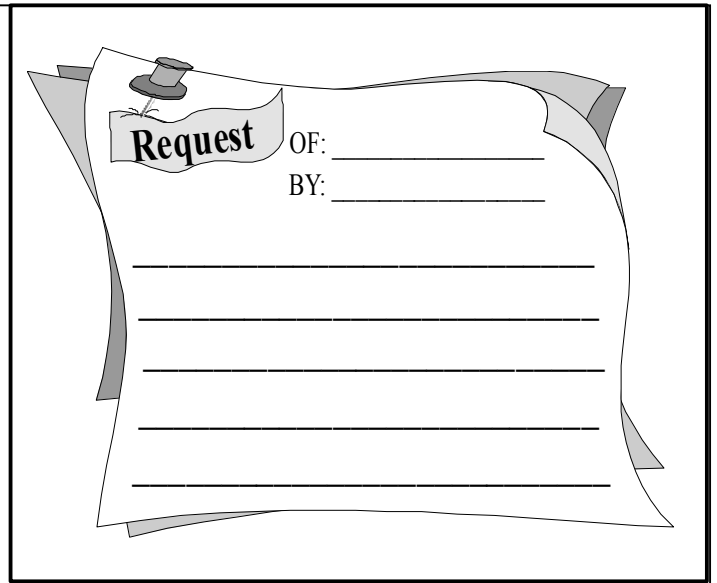
<i>ISSUES</i> that you have with: (name) _____		Examples of <i>Feelings</i>
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	abandoned, angry, annoyed, cheated, confused, controlled, criticized, cut off, deceived, depressed, desperate, devastated, disgusted, distrustful, dominated, embarrassed, frightened, frustrated, hateful, hopeless, humiliated, hurt ignored, insulated, irritated, let down, manipulated, misunderstood
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	nauseated, offended, overwhelmed, perplexed, pressured, put down, rejected, sickened, suspicious, tormented, unheard, up tight, used, etc.
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...for:		Examples of <i>Feelings</i>
(name) _____		
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	accepted, appreciated, amused, calm, confident, cared for, delighted, elated, encouraged, excited, fulfilled, grateful, happy, heard, honored, hopeful, inspired, invigorated, liberated, loved, optimistic, playful, reassured, recognized, refreshed, relaxed, relieved, respected, safe, satisfied, supported, thrilled, understood, valued, vindicated, wanted, worthy, etc.
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	
1) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<i>My Feelings</i> ⇨ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	



A request form template with a torn paper effect and a pushpin at the top left. The word "Request" is written in a bold, serif font on a small tag. To the right of the tag are two lines for "OF:" and "BY:". Below these are five horizontal lines for writing the request.

Request OF: _____
BY: _____




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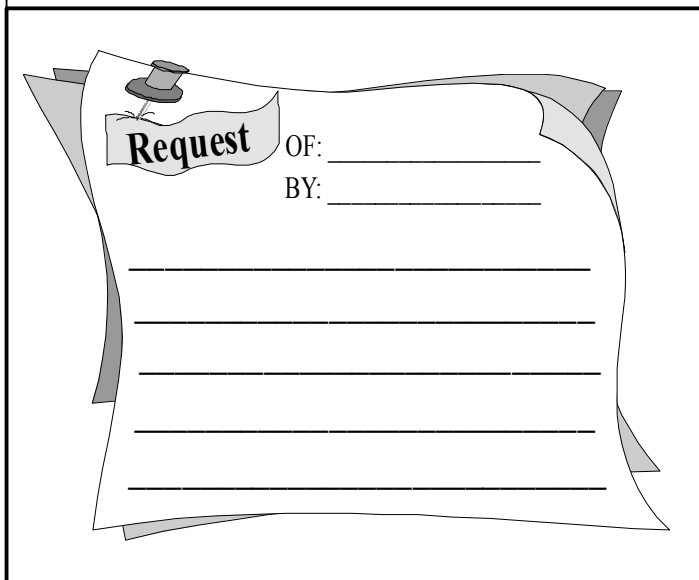
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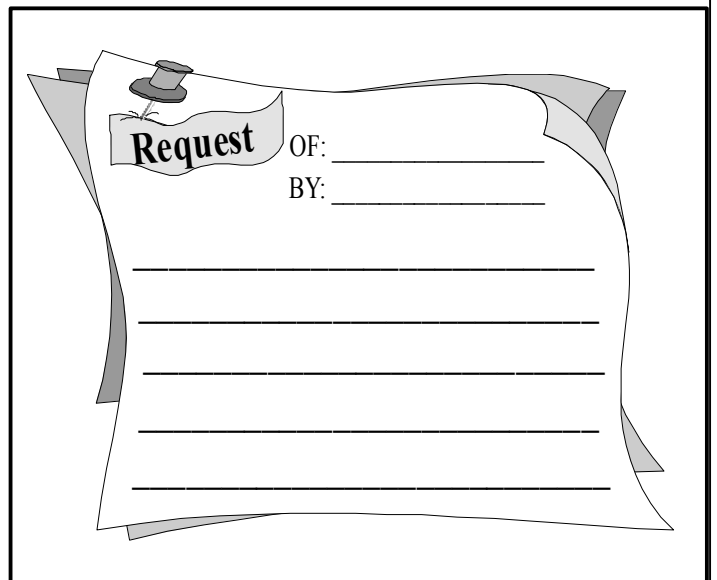
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