

# CONFLICT BLUEPRINT

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## ***STEP 1: LISTENING & VALIDATION***

No one can engage in persuasion until both of you can state your partner's position to your partner's satisfaction. Slow down. Take turns as:

### ***Speaker:***

- No Blaming, no "you" statements.
- Talk about your feelings.
- Use only "I" statements about a specific situation.
- State **positive** need. Within every complaint, there is a longing and a recipe.

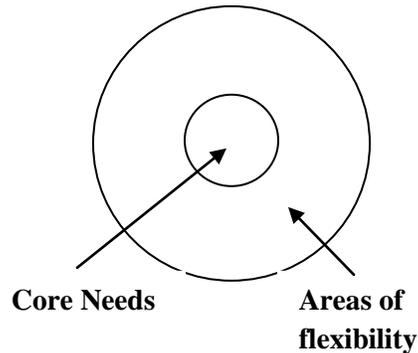
### ***Listener:***

- Postpone your own agenda. Hear and repeat the content of the speaker's needs and perspective (the story).
- Here speaker's feelings (name emotions, feel them).
- **Validate** speaker by completing the sentence, "It makes sense to me that you would feel that way and have these needs, because..."
- OK to ask questions.

## ***FLOODED?***

*Take a break, self-soothe.*

## ***STEP 2: COMPROMISE & PROBLEM-SOLVING***



This is where persuasion belongs. To feel safe, first identify your core need and help your partner understand why it is core. Then compromise on areas of flexibility.

## ***STEP 3: DREAMS WITHIN CONFLICT***

Gridlock and perpetual problems: What is the meaning behind each person's position? Honor one another's dreams. The goal here is *Dialogue*, understanding, and the acceptance of enduring personality differences.

## ***STEP 4: THE AFTERMATH OF REGRETTABLE INCIDENTS***

Process the incident. Don't get back into it. There are two valid realities. Understand and validate your partner's reality.

**Rapoport's assumption of similarity.** When you identify a negative quality in your partner, try to see that very quality in yourself. When you identify a positive quality in yourself, try to see that very quality in your partner.



## SESA CLIENT WORKSHEET: Conflict Blueprint: Step 1

Adapted from Gottman Method Therapy

The assumption of the conflict blueprint is that conflict is necessary in relationships. What conflict is basically about is a failure to connect with one another's point of view. The goal is learning to understand within conflict. The skills you will learn are how to deal with and manage disputes through understanding, cooperation and persuasion. Copies of this can be found at:

<http://www.sesa-woruban.com/Couples-Counselling.html>

### THE RULES

1. In every interaction there are **two valid realities**. This is because each person processes the world differently and has their own unique version of what is real. The goal is to try and understand your partner's reality, with an agreeable frame of reference.
2. **It is necessary to convey to the partner the he or she has been heard and understood.** It is important to understand what the person is feeling and thinking. Use the validation exercise in the Stress Reducing Conversation. You will each learn to **postpone persuasion or getting your way until each of you state your partner's position to their partner's satisfaction.** Remember, this does not necessarily mean that you agree to that position. You simply are attempting to completely understand your partner's position.

### Step 1: Listening & validation

Each person will hear and understand the position, the feelings and the needs of the other partner. You actively take turns being listener and speaker.

#### The Speaker's job:

This is a new way of speaking. It takes the validation of the Stress Reducing Conversation and expands upon it.

1. Take a moment to focus on what you are feeling. Silently validate yourself.
2. State complaints as wishes, hopes and needs in a positive manner. Remember that behind every complaint is a need. Within every need, there is a recipe for obtaining that need.

3. Try to transform your complaint from blaming and criticism. This transforms the complaint to a stated positive need.

#### **RULES FOR SPEAKER:**

- No blaming
- No “you” statements
- Talk about your feelings
- Use only “I” statements about a specific situation.
- State a **positive** need.

This final point is sometime difficult because when we are in conflict and are hurt, we lash out and forget to be mindful of our needs or of what will remedy the situation. We have been trained to cast blame and to think about what the partner should be stopping. This causes the partner to feel unheard, and less than. When you transform the criticism into a **positive need you are giving a way for your partner to shine for you, to be understood by your partner and heard. This is turn allows the partner to feel that they too can be heard and are your equal.**

#### **The Listeners Job.**

The listener has to be willing to meet the speaker’s needs, at least to some degree. The listener has to be open to the reality of their partner. The listener must be able to verbalize the partner’s position to his or her satisfaction so that the partner knows that they are completely understood.

#### **RULES FOR LISTENER.:**

- Listen to the content of the speaker’s needs and the perspective they have. Hear their narrative and become familiar with how they speak the story of their emotions and position. Listen mindfully, focusing on the speaker completely.
- Hearing and being able to label the feelings of the partner. Use the validation sheet, if need be, from the Stress Reducing exercise.
- Summarize to the speaker’s satisfaction what the speaker’s position is.
- Validate the speaker by completing sentences like “It makes sense to me that you would feel that way and have these needs because . . .”

Prior to validating, ask questions to fully understand the need. **Do not interrogate.** The point is to understand what the need is about completely. Sometimes it is helpful to say sentences like: “Help me understand why this is so important to you. Is there a story behind that need?” Be flexible and remember, validation is also about finding that kernel of truth within the speaker’s view point without having to completely agree.