

## **Tool #1 - Communication Intimacy Checklist: How we avoid intimacy by the way we talk!**

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In order to learn about connecting with your live-in partner in healthy ways, you must first examine the rules you have learned to *avoid* closeness in relationships. The following is a checklist for assessing habits you might want to break. Check all that apply to your typical communication patterns with your partner.

- Always say "you" or "it" instead of "I."
- If someone says something personal to you, joke about it or laugh.
- Try to maintain topical discussions. Talk about "safe" subjects like weather, sports, or current events, where little personal disclosure is made. The language is usually in the form of "it" or "they."
- If someone takes an emotional risk with you, ignore it or change the subject. If someone states they like something you did or they want to get to know you better, do not acknowledge their reaching out to you.
- If you like someone, tell another person instead of the one you like. Be indirect.
- Never talk openly with a family member or close friend about your relationship with him or her, especially if you are alone together.

- ❑ Avoid being alone with the person who you are supposed to be intimate with. Escape any opportunities for closeness. If you are alone, bring up another person - or topic - to talk about.
- ❑ Don't disclose any strong feelings of loving, caring, loneliness, sadness, or fear.
- ❑ Never acknowledge any pain from your past; keep it secret.
- ❑ Protect yourself from who you really are; turn to others to define you. Fulfill *others'* expectations of you, not your own.
- ❑ Don't risk being vulnerable or unprotected. If you hear about someone's vulnerability, be sure to gossip to others about it or store it to use against the person at a later time for revenge.
- ❑ Stay busy; fill up with chatter, alcohol, food, work, and things. You won't have to feel lonely.