



ARE YOU LIVING FROM YOUR CORE SELF?

So many of the couples we see at the Marriage Recovery Center are angry, defensive or completely withdrawn from each other. There are often years of unresolved issues that have led to complete hopelessness, which is reflected in their anger and defensiveness towards each other.

At the Marriage Recovery Center, we call this “reactive behavior” --- coming from one’s “Protective Self”—a part of our character designed to protect ourselves, but the same part that often creates more trouble for us. Our Protective Self is that part of us that has guns ready, fist pumped and ready for action, adrenaline flowing and able to take on the world. However, this protective part—our Protective Self—also causes great damage.

From our Protective Self, we often feel so overwhelmed with emotions that we come across to our mate as accusatory, self-righteous, critical and shaming. In our Protective Self, we often feel anger, though we have found that anger is a secondary emotion, covering the true emotions of hurt, sadness, and loneliness.

If our Protective Self is over-reactive, causing even more fighting and conflict, what is the healthier option? In a Marriage and/or Personal Intensive, which we conduct at The Marriage Recovery Center, we coach individuals to find their “Core Self” where we can get ourselves into a calm, clear, convicted and connected place.

When we are in our Core Self, we can tap into our true, deeper feelings. This is the place that Scripture talks about when it says we are to be “sober minded; be watchful.” (1 Peter 5: 8) We have found tremendous change occur in couples when they are both able to get into their Core Self, where they are centered, and often find themselves feeling more connected and caring towards their mate.

Here are some tips on recognize when you are shifting into your Protective Self and ways to get into your true, authentic, Core Self:

First, *take care of your Self*. Learn how to relax by breathing slower and taking deeper breaths. Be very mindful of yourself, noting how and when you escalate. Then determine what helps you find peace? Do you need to take a walk? Go for a drive? Pray? By first taking care of yourself, you will begin to feel peaceful and calm.

Second, *discover what is really bothering you?* You might initially believe that your spouse makes you angry by how he/she is treating you. However, ask yourself what is below that anger (what is really causing it?). Are you feeling rejected? Unloved? Unimportant? If so, these are real feelings that your spouse can most likely hear from you.

Third, *ask for a moment to collect yourself, trying to discover what you are feeling and what you need*.

Remember that your mate will never be able to hear you from your Protective Self. What do need to ask for? If your needs are NOT being met, that means you need to ask your spouse to meet your specific needs. Share your feelings and what you need from your spouse.

Fourth, *know that emotions are contagious*. You determine how your spouse will react and respond to you. If you approach your spouse with anger and defensiveness, you will hook an angry, defensive spouse. If you come to your mate from a calm, compassionate place you will most likely find a kind, caring response.

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Finally, *practice speaking from your Core Self*. This will take work. You will need to practice the art of knowing how you feel, knowing what ‘hooks’ you, and knowing how to effectively respond from your Core Self. It takes practice being ‘slow to anger.’ It takes work to know what you are really feeling and what you need to ask for.

Would you like to “hook” your mate’s Core Self—that part of them that can feel compassionate for you and you for them--rather than their Protective Self? Since emotions are contagious, this can be done, leading to healing and significant emotional healing. Would you like help learning to how to find and operate from your “Core Self?” If so, contact Dr. Hawkins to learn about a healing process called Core Self Integration today and how you can apply this to your life.

Dr. Hawkins and his team is available to work with you via Phone, Skype or intensive counseling for you and/or your marriage. Please go to our website, www.marriagerecoverycenter.com and discover more information about this as well as the free downloadable eBook, *A Love Life of Your Dreams*, including other free videos and articles. Please send responses to me at drdavid@marriagerecoverycenter.com and also read more about *The Marriage Recovery Center* on our website. You’ll find videos and podcasts on sexual addiction, emotionally destructive marriages, codependency and affair-proofing your marriage.