

Relationship Journal* Part 1 & 2

Paradoxical Invitation

During the first session I will offer lots of empathy before issuing the paradoxical invitation. Generally I've already done some education on relationship work during the consultation.

Paradoxical invitation. Let them know, they will have to do all the work and only look at themselves. IE: "Are you willing to look solely at your part? OR if working with couples you can ask: Who wants to do this painful work first?"

Moment in Time/Specificity

Use a relationship journal just to capture specificity. IE: Fill in ONLY steps 1 & 2 (but NOT the emotions. Asking the client to think about what the other person is feeling needs to be done AFTER addressing the resistance.) We won't go through the whole Relationship journal in one go. We use it just like the DML.

See sample RJ next page.

Vignette for sample: Jacob would like to be closer to his older brother Ralph. They've not spoken in a few years due to conflict around taking care of their parents. Jacob moved away after college and Jacob believes Ralph is resentful he was left to care for their parents by himself.

Practice

Choose someone you'd like to get close to. Think of a specific time you had a negative or mediocre interaction. Fill in Part 1 and 2.

Source/References

Therapists' ebook, "Tools NOT Schools", pg. 894-904

Feeling Good Together, pg. 51-55; pg. 243-250

[Podcast 56](#) & [Podcasts 126](#)

Relationship Journal *

Event or
Comments,
Optional:

Talking to Ralph for the first time in 6 months.

Step 1a – S/he said: Write down **exactly** what the other person said. Be brief:

I don't know why you want to fix things now. You seem to have everything all figured out for yourself and have left our parents care up to me.

Step 1b – His/her feelings: Check the emotion words s/he might have been feeling if you aren't sure, just put your best guesses.

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| ☐ Sad | ☐ Blue | ☐ Depressed | ☐ Down | ☒ Unhappy |
| ☐ Anxious | ☐ Worried | ☐ Panicky | ☐ Nervous | ☐ Frightened |
| ☐ Guilty | ☐ Remorseful | ☐ Bad | ☐ Ashamed | ☒ Defensive |
| ☐ Inferior | ☐ Worthless | ☒ Inadequate | ☐ Defective | ☐ Incompetent |
| ☐ Lonely | ☐ Unloved | ☒ Unwanted | ☒ Rejected | ☒ Alone |
| ☐ Embarrassed | ☐ Foolish | ☐ Humiliated | ☐ Self-conscious | ☒ Upset |
| ☒ Frustrated | ☐ Stuck | ☐ Thwarted | ☐ Defeated | ☐ Furious |
| ☒ Angry | ☒ Mad | ☒ Resentful | ☒ Annoyed | ☐ Irritated |
| ☐ Other: <input type="text"/> | | | | |

Step 2a – I said: Write down **exactly** what you said next. Be brief:

It was your choice to stay. I love our parents just as much as you do!

Step 2b – My feelings: Check the emotion words below to show how you felt when she/he said that. If you aren't sure, just put your best guesses.

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| ☐ Sad | ☐ Blue | ☐ Depressed | ☐ Down | ☒ Unhappy |
| ☐ Anxious | ☐ Worried | ☐ Panicky | ☐ Nervous | ☐ Frightened |
| ☐ Guilty | ☐ Remorseful | ☐ Bad | ☐ Ashamed | ☐ Defensive |
| ☐ Inferior | ☐ Worthless | ☐ Inadequate | ☒ Defective | ☐ Incompetent |
| ☐ Lonely | ☒ Unloved | ☒ Unwanted | ☒ Rejected | ☒ Alone |
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| ☒ Frustrated | ☐ Stuck | ☐ Thwarted | ☐ Defeated | ☐ Furious |
| ☐ Angry | ☐ Mad | ☐ Resentful | ☒ Annoyed | ☐ Irritated |
| ☐ Other: <input type="text"/> | | | | |

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Resistance – CBA of Blame*

There are three ways to address resistance in relationships. I've put the pro's and con's of each in the description as well as when and how to use them.

The willingness to stop blaming the other person and examine their own role in the problem is the key to developing a more satisfying relationship and I would point this out if any of the following reveal the client is ready to accept their part in improving the relationship.

#1 – Pre-filled in Version (see attached):

This version often doesn't sit well with more compassionate therapists because the language is direct, even slightly hostile. But I believe David does that because clients need to see what they are doing for what it really is. Personally, I like to assign this one as homework so the client can take time to absorb what's on the page and not feel pressured to "look good" in front of me. If you do use this in person, I suggest lots of empathy, including self-disclosure. Encourage them to see this in a positive way, IE: "I can see why you'd want to do ____ (be specific to their situation).

This worksheet is ALSO good for homework when working on step 4 of the Relationship Journal as a reminder of why they might struggle with doing the 5 Secrets. You can also use this worksheet (look it over rather than reading it or sharing with client) to make these suggestions to your client while doing the "blank" version, you can then soften the language if you prefer.

#2 - Blank CBA of Blame (see attached):

In this worksheet (or just a piece of paper with a line down the middle), you will have the client list the advantages and disadvantages of blaming the other person for the problems in the relationship. Focus on helping the client to discover that there are lots of advantages (like habit work don't help with disadvantages). If you, or the clients, doesn't like the word 'blame' remember this is not a judgement. We would blame Hitler for all the atrocities committed by others he inspired / coerced. While the word may feel triggering, it's important we don't sugar coat it. However, I am happy to soften the language just a bit, IE: "Let's have a look at all the reasons to hold the other person accountable and even why you should blame them for the problems in your relationship."

With this sheet we even get to look at the cost to blame. Don't HELP on this side! Resist the urge!!!

Once the client has listed all the advantages and disadvantages on the CBA form, have them rate the sides a 100-point scale. Ask the client whether the costs or the benefits of this mind-set are greater.

If they decide to keep blaming the other person (any score of 50 or higher on the advantages side), the prognosis for the relationship will be extremely poor and you can sit with open hands, doing a willingness check in. You may even use a fall back position of some kind, IE: "Makes sense you want to keep holding the other person accountable and are not ready to do all the work to improve your relationship. Since we can't fix them, maybe there is something else you'd like to work on?"

#3 - Adapted CBA of Blame Worksheet (see attached):

Ok, the best for last. Of course I am biased since I created this one. After taking a course with Thai-An I realized I had trouble remember some of the keys to doing assessment of resistance and psychoeducation with relationship clients so I developed this form with help from Thai-An and David. This is my go-to worksheet after a client accepts the Paradoxical Invitation.

See worksheet, should be relatively intuitive if you follow the steps and you can use the prompts to do some psychoeducation along the way. I'll demo this in group.

Assessing Motivation

When doing relationship work, like habit work, resistance comes back over and over. We need a tool to address this as needed. For sure you'll want to check in after doing the CBA of Blame and before teaching the 5 Secrets, but also whenever you feel some push back or frustration from the client.

How to do it: Ask the client one of the following (pick and choose what seems relevant):

- "On a scale of 0-100, how close do you currently feel toward this person?"
- "How close do you want to feel to this person on a scale of 0 to 100?"
- "On a scale of 0-100, how motivated are you to do this work?"
- "How willing are you to do all the work to improve this relationship, from 0 to 100?"

Repeat these motivation questions throughout relationship work until you as the therapist is 100% convinced the client is onboard AND ask them again whenever resistance returns. This could be while working through the relationship journal, after doing the Interpersonal downward arrow, during 5 Secrets training, etc.

Practice

Think of someone you'd like to get closer to and use that to practice. (You'll want to stick with the same person for all the practices if possible.) Fill in the first 2 steps of a Relationship Journal BEFORE class (or as fast as possible).

Pick ONE of the CBA of Blames, I'd recommend the "newer" one (blank version attached) or the "blank" one (just use a blank document with table or line down the middle of the page).

- **Clinician:** Invite client to do the CBA of blame, "There are many good reasons to not do all the work on fixing your relationship. I think it's really important we explore this together."
- **Client:** "Ok, I am willing to do that."

Work through it together (you can skip to PART C on the new version). Clinician should give lots of empathy and can help with all the good reasons NOT to change / blame the other person, but do NOT help with the disadvantages or reasons to work on the relationship.

STOP & DEBRIEF -- **Client** gives clinician feedback

- One thing you liked.
- One thing you would have improved.

SWITCH ROLES & REPEAT - IF time do it again. It's ideal if you can practice 2 or 3x each.

Source/References

- *Therapists' ebook, "Tools NOT Schools"*, pg. 894-904
- *Feeling Good Together*, pg. 51-55; pg. 243-250
- [Podcast 56](#) & [Podcasts 126](#)
- Recovery from the Angry, Blaming self. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i88RlrePPoU>

12 GOOD Reasons NOT to Listen*

1. Truth. I'm right and you're wrong.
2. Blame. It's all your fault.
3. Defensiveness. I have every right to defend myself. You're full of B.S.
4. Mistrust. If I listen to you, you'll take advantage of me.
5. Denial. I'm the victim here. This problem isn't my fault.
6. Entitlement. You should be the way I expect you to be.
7. Control. I want to keep you in a one-down position.
8. Power. I enjoy intimidating you. I like to keep you under my thumb.
9. Competition. One of us must win and one of us must lose.
10. Revenge. I have the right to punish you. You deserve to suffer.
11. Problem-Solving. If we have a problem, we should try to solve it.
12. Hidden Agendas. I don't really want to get close to you.

12 GOOD Reasons NOT to Express Your Feelings

1. Conflict Phobia. People with good relationships should never fight or argue. Conflict is dangerous.
2. Disclosure Phobia. I can't let you see how I feel inside.
3. Emotional Perfectionism. I shouldn't feel the way I do. I need to control of my emotions.
4. Submissiveness. I should always please you, even if I make myself miserable in the process.
5. Approval Addiction. I can't risk criticism. I need your approval to feel happy and fulfilled.
6. Love Addiction. I can't risk rejection. I need your love to feel happy and fulfilled.
7. Perceived Narcissism. You're fragile. If I tell you how I feel, our relationship will fall apart.
8. Hopelessness. I've tried everything and nothing works. You'll never change.
9. Pride. I'm above feeling angry. I don't want to lower myself and let you see how upset I feel.
10. Helping. I must help you if you're upset.
11. Passive-Aggression. I'll punish you with silence. I'll act innocent and get back at you indirectly.
12. Mind-Reading. If you really loved me, you'd know how I feel and I wouldn't have to tell you.

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Jacob

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Relationship Cost-Benefit Analysis*

Instructions. List all the advantages and disadvantages of blaming the other person for the problems in your relationship. Then balance the advantages against the disadvantages on a 100-point scale. Put two numbers that reflect your ratings in the circles at the bottom. For example, if the advantages of blame feel significantly greater, you might put a 70 in the circle on the left and a 30 in the circle on the right. If the disadvantages feel slightly greater, you might put a 45 in the circle on the left and a 55 in the circle on the right

Advantages	Disadvantages
I didn't ask him to devote his life to taking care of our parents. He's always blamed me for stuff. It's unfair. It's easy to just blame him for all our relationship problems.	I miss being close to my brother. I might be able to help take care of some things relating to our parents if I knew better what was happening with them. I'm missing out on collaborating the care of our parents. It's been lonely avoiding my family.

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Relationship CBA Worksheet

A) Three options for any relationship:

1. Stay the same or keep the status quo.
2. Leave the relationship.
3. Improve the relationship.

I would like to consider my relationship with Ralph.

B) Three basic rules:

1. Any relationship problem is 100% you and 100% me. We can't place blame with any one person because of circular causality, that is my response feeds into your response, and vice versa.
2. We inadvertently create the relationship dynamic that we complain about.
3. We have a lot more power than we think. Change our 100% portion and we change the whole relationship.

I accept I have the power to change my portion which will change the dynamic of the relationship even if the other person is unwilling to change. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

C) Three critical areas to explore:

1. There are advantages/reasons to focus on the other person's errors, e.g. Relationships should be 50/50, It's their turn to put in effort, etc.
2. There are costs of solely working on yourself, e.g. I've already put in 150%.
3. These show something about you and your values. e.g. shows I value truth, fairness, and mutually beneficial relationships.

1. List the advantages and/or reasons to focus on the other person errors and flaws? I didn't ask him to devote his life to taking care of our parents. He's always blamed me for stuff. It's easy to just blame him for all our relationship problems. He's been hard to talk to and is very critical.	2. List all the costs or disadvantages of solely working on yourself? It's unfair. It's hard to deal with his superiority complex. It would be a lot of work. It would be hard to address the unspoken issues between us. I might feel more guilty about not being there for my parents if I face this relationship.
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3. What do the answers to #1 & #2 say about me that is positive and awesome? How are these connected to my values?

I value peace and calm in my life.

I don't want to feel bad about my life, I think I choose well.

Shows I value balance in my life.

I am not in denial about how I cope.

Shows I am not vindictive or judgement.

Shows I don't expect my brother to give up his whole life taking care of our parents.

E) How willing are you to do all the work after considering all of this? Looking at all the above reasons and values, "how willing are you to change" from 0-100?

80

F) Considering all these powerful advantages of focusing on the other person's errors and the cost of working on yourself, why would you want to move forward with this hard work? What are the costs to not working on the relationship?

I miss being close to my brother.

I might be able to help take care of some things relating to our parents if I knew better what was happening with them.

I'm missing out on collaborating the care of our parents.

It's been lonely avoiding my family.

G) Has your willingness level changed after going through section F? Where is it now 0-100?

90

When you find yourself less motivated you can view your responses in section F. To get more tools for relationships we highly recommend the book, "Feeling Good Together" by Dr. David Burns.

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2. There are costs of solely working on yourself, e.g. I've already put in 150%.
3. These show something about you and your values. e.g. shows I value truth, fairness, and mutually beneficial relationships.

1. List the advantages and/or reasons to focus on the other person errors and flaws?	2. List all the costs or disadvantages of solely working on yourself?

3. What do the answers to #1 & #2 say about me that is positive and awesome? How are these connected to my values?

E) How willing are you to do all the work after considering all of this? Looking at all the above reasons and values, "how willing are you to change" from 1-100?

F) Considering all these powerful advantages of focusing on the other person's errors and the cost of working on yourself, why would you want to move forward with this hard work? What are the costs to not working on the relationship?



G) Has your willingness level changed after going through section F? Where is it now 0-100?



When you find yourself less motivated you can view your responses in section F. To get more tools for relationships we highly recommend the book, "Feeling Good Together" by Dr. David Burns.

Voicing the Resistance & Motivation Script

Move through the CBA of Blame, tell the client, "I'm going to read to you all your resistance parts and your job is to argue for change."

Keep your voice neutral as you read.

Record it. This creates a Motivation Script.

Ask them to listen to the motivation script together every day.

How willing are you to ...

Cut off is 60 or 65%

Your willingness drops when you leave the session, when something triggers you. The motivation script keeps your motivation up.