


## A Structured Dialogue to Create Safety - Any Relationship Can Be Transformed

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April 25, 2023



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 Safe Conversations®

Coach Myrna April 25, 2023

[www.coachmyrna.org/](http://www.coachmyrna.org/)

### A Structured Dialogue to Create Safety

Safe Conversations® has a three-step dialogue process: **Mirroring, Validating, and Empathizing**. This process helps us find common ground and conduct all our conversations within a safe space. Imagine what it would be like if you and your partner could have that annual money talk without fighting! Imagine talking about it calmly, lovingly, with both of you feeling heard and valued. How about discussing with your teenager the importance of making better choices about chores and curfew without any arguments or drama?

The aim of the structure dialogue process is to create safety in relationships so that honest conversations can happen without a power struggle. The three-steps help us to stay in the prefrontal cortex of our brain. Also, known as the upper brain, it is here that we can think, observe, remember past good experiences, and find win-win solutions. It is the portal through which interpersonal relationships are established. You can find more about the brain impacts our relationships and our emotions in these previous blog posts:

[www.coachmyrna.org/blog/our-brain-in-relationships](http://www.coachmyrna.org/blog/our-brain-in-relationships)

[www.coachmyrna.org/blog/flipping-your-lid](http://www.coachmyrna.org/blog/flipping-your-lid)

**Mirroring** is the important first step because it is about being heard and understood. If I am the one listening, my job is to listen to understand and mirror back what I've heard. This is a new way of listening that can open us up to curiosity instead of judgement. If I am the one speaking, I can feel safe to explore my feelings and begin to recognize that I am influenced by events from my past. It is important to recognize that our past impacts our current relationships and explore how this may be happening.

The first part of mirroring—asking for an appointment—changed my relationship with my husband. Asking, **“Is now a good time to talk?”** helped me to approach him with greater respect and allowed him to say “Yes, it is” or “No, now is not a good time.” If he said not now, I could ask for a future appointment. This simple question changed my habit of beginning a conversation without considering what he was doing.

When was the last time you had a conversation with someone you didn't see eye-to-eye with and they said, “You know? You make sense. I can totally see why you'd think that.” It's a pretty safe bet that doesn't happen very often. Most of us are taught to talk at or around or over each other rather

than listen to truly understand.

**Validating** another person's thoughts and feelings is not about agreeing or disagreeing with what they express. It is acknowledging that they make sense. It removes us from our defensiveness and helps us begin to look at the situation from the other's point of view. Even if we don't agree with them, we still let them know that they make sense – that THEY are what matters, not the opinions they hold. Validating one another is so important. It shows that our relationships can weather even the most polarizing opinions because, through the skill of validation, we can connect beyond our differences. Validating is the bridge to Empathy. If a person's experiences make sense, we can imagine how they might feel.

**Empathizing** is the highest form of connection in the Space Between. Connecting happens when we hear the words and experiences of another (mirroring) and understand their impact (validating). Then and only then, can we imagine how they might feel.

Dr. Harville Hendrix, co-founder of Safe Conversations®, has said, "Empathy is the capacity for one individual to imagine or experience the emotional state of another person even when they have not had a similar experience." Receiving empathy is our deepest longing--to have our feelings recognized and acknowledged.

I invite you to experience this amazing dialogue process for yourself. Join the three hour online webinar **Saturday, April 29 from 9 am to 12 noon PT/12--3 pm ET**. Join with a family member and learn to create greater connection and understanding. For more information and to register:

[www.coachmyrna.org/blog/our-brain-in-relationships](http://www.coachmyrna.org/blog/our-brain-in-relationships)

Contact me if you have any questions about Safe Conversations: [coachmyrnalapres@gmail.com](mailto:coachmyrnalapres@gmail.com)

To purchase my book on

Amazon: [www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH)

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*If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: [www.coachmyrna.org/](http://www.coachmyrna.org/) Find out more about Safe Conversations [www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html](http://www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html).*

