

# Confronting Hurt and Disappointment

Perhaps the physics needed to send a rocket into space is more complicated than relationships, but, at least, physics remains the same. Relationships can change in an instant due to the hidden emotional mindfield within everyone.

In the last few lessons, you've explored the differences between mistakes and patterns of behavior, and your non-negotiables. These are all part of the mindfield.

## How do you handle it when:

- You or your partner make a mistake
- A pattern of behavior you don't want in your life shows up
- One of your non-negotiables is breached

## How You Handle Hurt Determines Your Happiness

Imagine this... You're on your dream vacation with your partner. You couldn't decide upon the beach or the mountains, so you did both. The weather was exquisite. You skied on the water and in the snow. You laughed, ate wonderful food, did everything you wanted, and experienced both emotional and physical intimacy. It was two weeks of absolute bliss.

And then...

Your partner made a joke about something that happened in the past and hurt your feelings - badly.

Let's explore the situation.

## The Before and After of a Hurtful Experience

If you tell someone about what happened, what would they say?

- How horrible. How could they do that to you?

- Why are you letting a 5-second comment ruin your vacation?

If the comment was an isolated event, the second question is relevant. The answer is, “Because it triggered a painful event in your past.”

Relationship challenges rarely happen in isolation. How it affects you can be determined by your past and the impact of the event.

### **The background story makes a difference:**

1. **Personal history.** Your personal history with such comments makes a difference in how you handle them.
  - If a parent said something similar which hurt or demeaned you, your partner’s comment can bring up those hurts. Instead of being an adult, you feel like a 12-year old kid and react like one.
  - When a past issue is triggered, it’s a personal issue and one you would benefit from exploring with a therapist. It’s time to stop childhood wounds from causing problems in your relationship.
2. **Relationship history.** The past history of your relationship can affect how you respond.
  - Was the comment humiliating or degrading?
  - Was it a comment related to something you asked them not to make?

### **The consequences have an impact:**

1. **Were others affected?**
  - If the hurtful comment involved someone else, there’s a possibility another relationship could be affected.
  - If you stormed out of the room and crashed into a server carrying a tray of drinks, imagine the aftermath. **The aftermath anchors in the thoughtless comment.**

- The more people affected, the more difficult the situation is. You've probably watched situation comedies and movies where everything that could go wrong did. There it's funny. When it's your life it's painful.

## **2. How you handle your hurt makes a difference in the impact of the statement.**

- Pretending it didn't happen and stuffing your feelings can result in a wedge between you and your partner.
- Expressing anger by leaving and not returning leaves the situation unresolved.
- **Do this instead:** Express your hurt and you both make a commitment to talk this out in your room. When handled with honesty and respect, you're able once again to enjoy emotional and physical intimacy.

## **The Severity of the Event**

We've been using a "comment" as the triggering event of the hurt and pain. Comments can lead to arguments and distance in a relationship.

### **What do you do if what happens was more than a comment?**

People have their strengths and weaknesses. That includes you. There will be mistakes, missteps, and broken promises mixed in with the wonderful and ordinary times. You or your partner may break one of the "non-negotiables."

You can read or watch the news to get an idea of how something unexpected can change your life forever. Whether the person responsible was you, your partner, some stranger, or a piece of the space station crashing on your car, if it affects you. It affects your relationship. If it affects your partner, it affects your relationship.

**There are options in having or rebuilding a healthy relationship in the midst of pain.**

## Try these strategies:

1. **Talk about your feelings.** Use “I” statements. “I feel/felt (name feeling). How you feel is important because feelings can determine how you act.”
  - A tip: If you say “I feel/felt that...” you’re talking about a thought, not a feeling.
  - You can still give thoughts, just do it in the context of feelings. “I felt devastated when I found out you were having an affair.”
2. **It’s important for both of you to express your feelings.**
3. **How can the two of you change this?** You can’t change what happened. It’s in the past. **The question is how you will create your future.**
  - Do you need to develop a plan of action? This can be in writing or sealed with a kiss.
  - Can you both let it go? Letting it go doesn’t mean burying it somewhere deep inside you where you can use it as a weapon later.
  - Can you accept each other as you are, human beings who will make mistakes?

## Summary and Reflection

In the midst of the wonder and joy of your relationship will be difficult times. Some are things you can’t control. Others are words or actions which hurt the other. **How you approach these times will add to your intimacy or create distance between you.**

In the next lesson, you will be given ideas on how to release and let go of the pain.

## Here’s What You Need To Do Today

