



TOOL 22

THE TRUTHFULNESS VOW

*We vow to always be truthful with one another.
If one of us is feeling upset, we vow to take the time
needed to process our emotions and
bring our relationship into a state
of harmony and balance.*

~ Carol Hansen & Victor Grey

This tool, I feel, is right at the top of the list when it comes to creating a balanced, healthy and loving relationship of trust between two individuals. If one of the parties in the relationship is upset and keeps that feeling inside, the energy between the two becomes strained and the original upset, which may have been minor, begins to consume more and more energy, throwing the relationship out of balance.

In order for a truthfulness vow to be effective, some ground rules need to be established and agreed upon by both parties. Following is a process Victor and I have used successfully. The time it takes will vary depending on the size of the issue. However we have noticed, the more we use the process the easier it becomes for us to reach resolution and return to a harmonious state.

THE TRUTHFULNESS AGREEMENT PROCESS

- ✦ 1. *We both agree*: when either of us is feeling upset by something that has happened in our relationship, we will give ourselves time to get in touch with our emotions and to think through the reasons for our upset.

- ✦ 2. *We both agree*: that once we have gotten clear about the reasons for our upset (i.e., identifying the thoughts fueling the emotion), we will set aside adequate time for the two of us to talk and process our emotions.

- ✦ 3. *We both agree*: to hold a space of safety during our processing time for each of us to express our feelings without interruption. We will listen from the heart, earnestly making an effort to put ourselves in the other person's shoes.

- ✦ 4. *We both agree*: to take responsibility for our own feelings and to express how we are feeling without blaming the other for causing our upset.

(For example, the upset person may begin with: "When I expect you home at a certain time and you're late without calling me, I get worried that you may have been in an accident. It's important to me that you call me when you are going to be late.")

In this example the listening person is told of the expectation (i.e., *that the listener will be home at a certain time*), of the upset person's feeling when that expectation is not met (*I get worried*)

and what the upset person wants in the future (a phone call). By comparison, a blaming statement might go something like this: “I’m really angry because you never let me know when you are going to be late. It’s so irresponsible of you not to let me know!”

- ✦ 5. **We both agree:** to mirror back to each other what we have heard, asking if that is correct, to ensure there is no misunderstanding in communication between us.

(In this instance, the listener would say to the upset person, “What I hear you say is that you were scared when I didn’t call to let you know I was going to be late and from now on you would like me to make sure I call you when I’m not going to home on time. Is that correct?”)

- ✦ 6. **We both agree:** once the upset has been stated, mirrored back and understood, the listening person will say, “Tell me more.” This gives the upset person more opportunity to fully express any other thoughts that are fueling the upset.
- ✦ 7. **We both agree:** if other thoughts come up, we will continue to repeat steps 5 and 6 until all thoughts fueling the upset have been expressed and acknowledged.
- ✦ 8. **We both agree:** once the upset person feels complete, the roles will be reversed giving the listening person an opportunity to express his/her thoughts that might be fueling any emotions he/she is feeling.

(For example: "I felt so stressed at work today that I needed to unwind before I came home. I understand now that it's important for me to call so you don't worry. It's also important to me to know, when I come home after a stressful day I will be able to take 15 to 30 minutes of quiet time by myself just to unwind.)

(Repeat steps 5, 6 and 7.)

- ✦ 9. *We both agree:* once the process feels complete, we will reach an agreement on how to move forward.

Complete the process with a prayer of gratitude, similar to the one below, for the loving relationship of trust that you are building together.

We give thanks for this opportunity to deepen our relationship of trust and to grow our love for one another.