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DESC SCRIPTS

DESCRIBE:

- the situation and behaviors, not intentions or motives
- in concrete terms, specify time, or amount of times something happened
- avoid using vague language, “all the time,” “never” but use most of time, or more often than not.

EXPRESS: “I feel _____ and _____.”
or “I am _____.”

- If you use “I feel that. . .” you are expressing an opinion and not an emotion.
- your feelings
- calmly
- express them in a manner so as to help remedy the situation

SPECIFY: “I want _____.”

- be specific and concrete
- use a specific time frame
- ask within reason

CONSEQUENCES: If you do _____, then _____.
If you do not _____, then _____.

Tips for using the DESC Model

1. You can stop anywhere along the four steps. You might just describe what happened. You might describe and express. You might need to just describe, express and specific.

And when you are dealing with someone who really isn't remorseful and needs some consequences you might add them at this point.

2. Writing it down, getting it perfectly written is really useful. This is not something you do haphazardly. Some people pray, fast and prepare for the meeting. Putting it in writing and reading it to them, helps you not say what you don't want to say. It keeps us calm. On the other hand, it may help us stick to our points and not soften what we need to say out of fear. If the person gets reactive, defensive and tries to distort what we said, we have it in writing. Sometimes they go and say to others things we didn't say. We can say to them, this is what I said [because we have a copy], if it is appropriate to dialogue with anyone else. We don't want to gossip. Having it in writing also helps them read it again maybe in private to reconsider their defensive stance.
3. Deliver it in person in a loving manner and in a neutral place. No one really likes to be confronted in their home or on your turf. Go to a place where each party could leave in peace if the need arises.
4. Each of the four steps should be very short. The DESCRIBE can be maybe 3-4 sentences. It takes work to condense and stick to the facts. It can be done, if you get stuck, call me and we can work it through together. The EXPRESS and SPECIFY are one sentence each, "I feel _____ and _____," and "I want _____." The CONSEQUENCES are two "if . . . then" statements. Start with the positive outcome first, "if they do ____ then _____. This usually results in a better relationship. Stating the "if you do not. . ." is really important. This is what is going to cause them to listen to your request. They may begin to realize that they are losing a relationship with you. The choice is there. Let's be clear. We are not withholding a relationship with them or "writing them off." We are offering a relationship under certain conditions, and these conditions are not asking too much.
5. Some of us are too hurt and hold too much bitterness to want the relationship to work. Do not offer an "if you do" promise if you are not willing to work with them. Better to work it out and get yourself to a place of forgiveness and an openness for them to change, before you do this. We often predict a negative outcome by say, "I know how they are going to respond," or "I know what they are going to say." This is wrong of us. We can't play God and predict the future in this. This is judging them and not allowing any possibility for change. If they can't change, then maybe we can either. It is a dangerous way to live life, not keeping hope that anyone can change. Does this mean we become vulnerable and allow them to hurt us all over again. Sometimes. But many times not. We try to be neutral to allow them to apologize if they want to.