

## Relationship Skills Definitions

**Listening:** The ability to understand, to capture the full extent of what your partner is feeling, meaning, and conveying without reaction, judgment or personalizing.

**Validation:** Expressing your understanding of what your partner is experiencing and expressing (see the book "I Hear You").

**Speaking:** The ability to clearly express what you are thinking and feeling; what you are sure about and what you are unsure about, in an even way that is focused on revealing aspects of the self rather than focusing on others. Most clearly indicated by the use of "I" language rather than "you" language.

**Awareness:** The key to all skills. The ability to be conscious of what you are saying and doing, what the situation is, and what you are perceiving. What are you believing and assuming? It is at the heart of all the regulations and making meaningful attempts to act positively in the world.

**Emotional Regulation:** Knowing, accommodating and accepting what you are feeling. Being curious about your feelings and watching how they might affect, and come from your thoughts and your actions (see the RAIN technique).

**Cognitive Regulation:** Knowing what you are thinking. Being able to discern rational thoughts from irrational, helpful from unhelpful. Looking at the truth value of your thoughts and ideas. Looking for consistent patterns and developing an understanding of your perceptions, beliefs, assumptions and narratives.

**Behavioural Regulation:** Being aware of how you are acting both in the active and passive sense. Taking responsibility for your actions. Understanding how your actions or omissions affect your partner and/or others. Making adjustments to better reflect your intentions.

**Goodwill:** The idea of co-creating a positive space through small acts of kindness and generosity. The expression and the intent to be helpful, generous, considerate, and sensitive. Gary Chapman's idea of the "Love Bank" (see "The 5 love languages"). Gottman's idea of the "repository of positive sentiments."

**Respect:** The fundamental attitude of positive regard to the dignity of your partner. The maintenance of appropriate boundaries. The commitment not to be verbally, emotionally, or psychologically abusive or hurtful towards your partner. The expression of relationship dignity and diplomacy.

**Effort:** Through your intentions the actual energy you put into activating all of the relationship skills as well as your creativity and willingness to try new and different ways of connecting with your partner.