RULES OF ANGER MANAGEMENT AND POWER AND CONTROL

All of us bring numerous relationship interactions from our family of origin into our marriage relationship. Most of these interactions have never been examined, they are automatically transferred to the next relationship, the marriage. The homework in this chapter will help you identify three significant areas of the interaction in your family of origin.

You will also have the opportunity as the talker to ask for “feedback.” Feedback is not an evaluation or a criticism, but rather an affirmation, an observation, or some other form of positive support. As the listener in the following monologues, you must keep the environment safe if your spouse is going to open up to you. Be careful of storing up what you hear to use later against your spouse. Do not use what you hear to validate your perception of what has gone wrong in your marriage. Rather, just listen and learn as your spouse walks you into his or her life as a child. Use the same format as you did before in the earlier monologues.

FIRST MONOLOGUE: Family-of-Origin Conflict Resolution Practices

How did your family of origin resolve differences? What rules did they use and require of the children? Following are some common rules/practices:

- Some families run away from anger entirely, lest they say something they later will regret.
- Some family members can be verbal with anger, others can physically hit people or things. Some members are allowed to knock holes in walls or slam doors.
- Some families have different rules for the males and females in the family
- Some families “select” one person to be angry all the time—to express the anger for everyone else in the family.
- Some families say in effect, “Smile, pretend like it doesn’t bother you.”
- Some families act like conflict doesn’t bother them but retaliate when the other least expects it.

1. What one pattern best reflects your experience in your family of origin.
2. Did it remain consistent in all the time you lived in this family.
3. If it changed, why?
4. Who enforced this practice and how did they do that?
5. Was any family member free from the rules that controlled all the other family members.
6. What did you like and dislike about this practice
7. How have you brought / let your family of origins anger management practice.
8. Does it work here? Is your spouse satisfied? What needs to change?