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TALKR_x
JOURNAL™

*Write your
truth Daily.*

- Doctor Neha

NEHA SANGWAN, M.D.

TALKRx
JOURNAL

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Cover design: Monica Gurevich-Importico
Interior design: Monica Gurevich-Importico

First Printing April 2015 / Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction

Congratulations and welcome to your personal *TalkRx Journal*. This is where you get to apply the tools in *TalkRx* to your life.

The same practical communication tools that I discovered for myself and my patients will also help you. Once you know how to communicate clearly, you'll improve your relationship with yourself and with the world around you while simultaneously improving your health—long before you end up in a doctor's office.

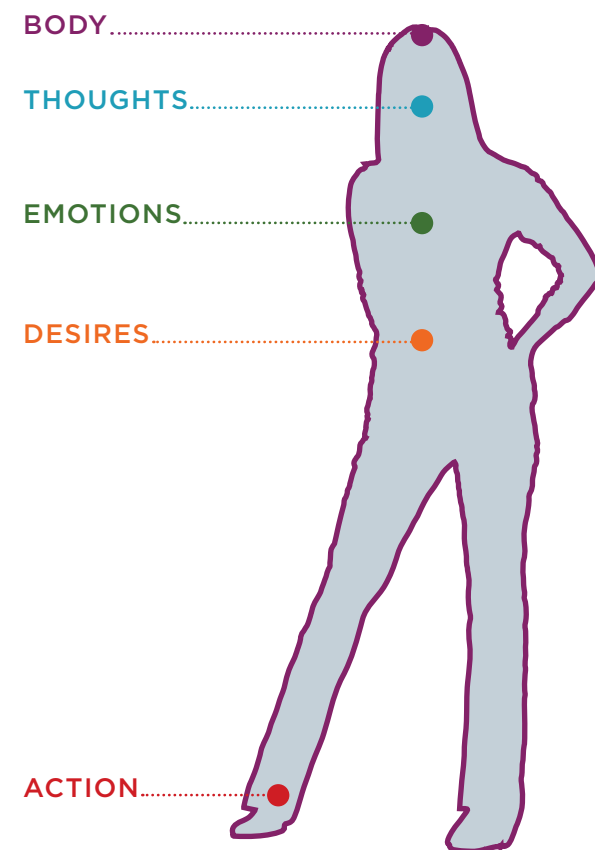
It starts with your everyday conversations—whether you're handling a challenging exchange at work or simply sharing something with a loved one. You no longer have to wait for someone else to change in order to express yourself clearly. You are empowering yourself with everything you need to show up differently and create the outcomes you desire.

If you take responsibility for your own communication, you can turn around some of the most challenging interactions in your life, which will decrease your stress level and have you sleeping soundly again. The conversation begins internally and helps you get crystal clear about what you want before engaging in conversation with another.

As you read in *TalkRx*, I call this communication framework the i-Five Conversation. This is a method that combines both your body's physiology with your thoughts, emotions and desires in order to create effective action.

The "i" stands for interpret and integrate. It also stands for "I"—meaning taking personal accountability for your part of any interaction. The "Five" represents the five key components of clear communication as delineated by the following graphic.

THE i-FIVE CONVERSATION

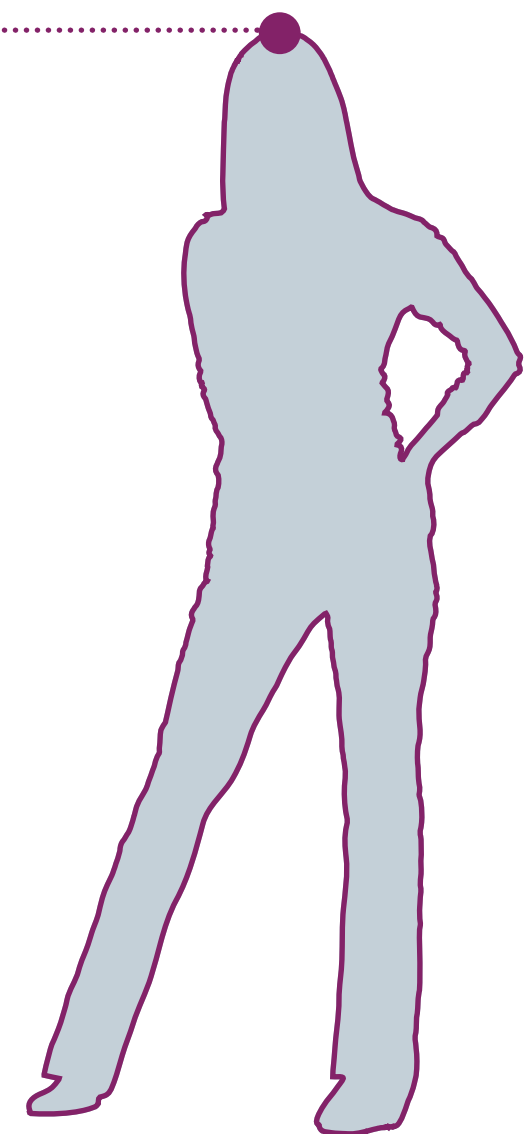


How you interpret and integrate these five key areas of the i-Five Conversation will determine your success in connecting to yourself and others. The i-Five Conversation will help you become a clear, concise, and direct communicator.

After each chapter in *TalkRx*, you will find five corresponding questions in your *TalkRx Journal* to reinforce and personalize what you've learned. Once you answer these questions, you will be ready to apply these specific tools in your relationships.

STEP 1: Interpreting Your Body

interpreting your
BODY.....



Chapter 1: Missing What's Right in Front of You

Your body picks up objective data from your primary senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell) in your environment, or in communication with another. This is what you observe as you explore the world. When you are in communication with another person, there are three primary ways you pick up information—body language, tone, and words. How much information you gather is determined by the medium of communication you choose. And the more awareness you have about how you gather and sort external data, the easier it is to problem-solve when communication challenges arise.

How external data in conversation changes across different mediums

words-only = email, text, tweet, chat, online posts

words + tone = phone, audio

words + tone + body language = in-person, or video

TALKRx TOOL

Curiosity Tool

When in doubt about what just happened

1. State what you observed (external data)
2. Ask a question (curiosity)

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What aspect of external communication influences you most? Body language? Tone? Words?

2. What mode of communication do you use most often (in person, video, phone, email, facebook, text, tweet, chat, online posting)?

3. What makes that mode of communication the best fit (efficiency, connection, convenience, etc.)?

4. What type of communication do you use when facing a challenging situation, or conflict?

5. Do you usv

Chapter 2

Knock, Knock. Guess Who?

Your body is talking to you through a unique language of physical signals (see Body Map). Slight bodily changes are the earliest signs telling you that you need to pay attention to what’s happening within you and around you. I refer to these as intelligent signals because they are a part of your body’s physical intelligence, gathering information from your internal world.

The intensity of your physiological signals warns you that your environment is changing. There are three distinct zones to describe that change—the comfort zone, the learning zone, and the panic zone. Once you can recognize and interpret your body’s intelligence—your unique physical sensations associated with each zone—you’ll be able to quickly navigate situations and know how to ask for what you need.

How Your Body Talks

YOUR BODY’S PHYSICAL INTELLIGENCE =

your body’s senses gathering data (external)

+

your body’s physical sensations (internal data)

Body Map

A tool to decipher the unique way that your body talks to you

BODY MAP Pay attention to your physiological signals*



***WARNING:** These sensations can signal a serious medical condition. First and foremost, discuss them with your physician or health professional. Once you have a clean bill of health from your doctor, you can explore their meaning around getting out of your comfort zone.

Your Body Zones

COMFORT ZONE = familiar, known

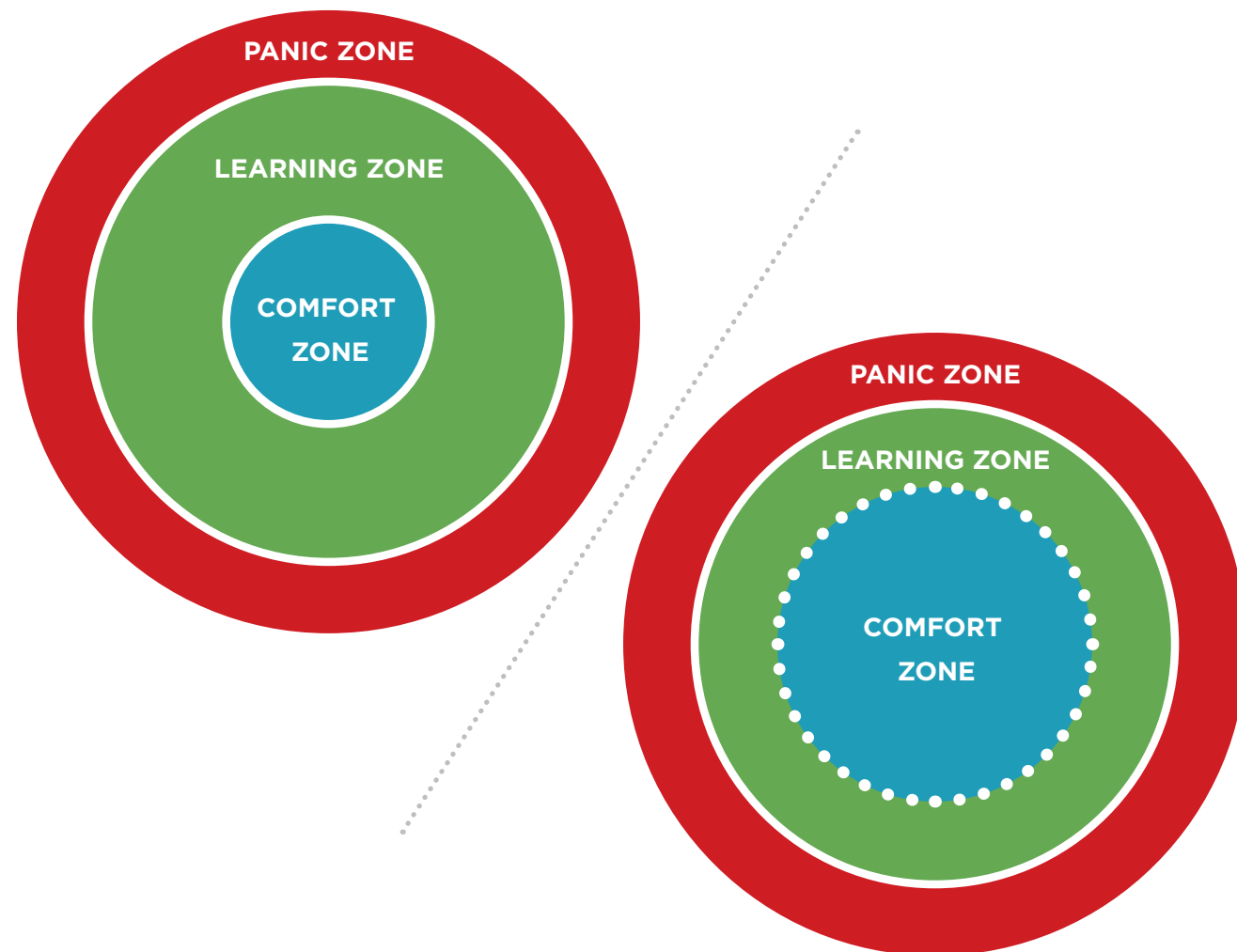
- Staying here too long can lead to feeling stuck, or bored

LEARNING ZONE = full of adventure and growth

- This zone may be associated with some physical discomfort

PANIC ZONE = dangerous, beyond safe limits

- Your body may override your ability to take action



QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. As you read this chapter, what physical signals did you notice in your body?

2. What are the unique physical signals that your body uses to let you know that something's comfortable and safe (e.g., relaxed muscles, slow deep breathing, calmness in your chest)?

3. What's the unique physical way that your body lets you know that you're leaving the comfort zone (e.g., heart racing, tingling in your fingers and toes, pit in your stomach, tense muscles)?

4. What's the unique physical way that your body lets you know that you're leaving the learning zone (e.g., going blank, unable to move, holding your breath, nausea, sweating)?

5. Label which zone—your comfort zone (CZ), learning zone (LZ), or panic zone (PZ)—best describes each of the scenarios below.

- _____ a. Telling your boss you can't stay late to finish a project
- _____ b. Giving a toast at your best friend's wedding
- _____ c. Taking care of a toddler for the weekend
- _____ d. Committing to being exclusive in your romantic relationship
- _____ e. Looking out over a city from the top of a skyscraper

Chapter 3

Numbing Out

When you ignore your body’s physiology, you miss important information and the advantage of picking up signals early. You can choose to shut down your body’s incoming messages in a variety of ways. No matter what the coping strategy, they all have one element in common: they serve to numb your body’s physical signals (heart racing, stomach turning, palms sweating, etc.), so you don’t have to face the real issue at hand.

TALKRx TOOLS

When you feel discomfort, become aware of your numbing strategies:

- Sugar-Caffeine Buzz Strategy
- Dull-Your-Senses Strategy
- New-Purse-and-Shoes Strategy
- Internet-Escape Strategy
- Other _____

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. When you experience internal discomfort, what do you turn to?

- Taking a nap
- Reading a novel
- Alcohol or recreational drugs
- Surfing social media
- Sugar, sugar, and more sugar
- Your personal favorite _____

2. If you gave each numbing strategies a name, what would they be?

3. How long do your strategies remain effective?

4. Name three ways your strategies have served you.

5. How do you know your strategy is no longer serving you?

Chapter 4

Tuning In

Tuning in is when you listen to and decipher your body's signals. You now know that pause buttons are for much more than stopping videos or music. Each of us has one. It's just that we haven't learned how to use it. When you hit your internal pause button—you have the power to respond rather than react. There is a big difference between reacting and responding. Reacting is an immediate, knee-jerk, reflexive answer that often comes from fear, the desire to please someone else, or an attempt to avoid conflict. A response, on the other hand, takes into account another person's request as well as your own needs. If you can pause long enough, you'll be able to come up with creative options and communicate clearly.

TALKRx TOOLS

A few ways to push your pause button:

1. Use Your Breath
2. Ground Your Body
3. Tense and Release

Soft-Belly Breathing

1. Place the palm of your hand on your relaxed belly.
2. Let gravity pull your shoulders down.
3. Slowly and deeply inhale, allow your abdomen to expand, and notice the hand on your abdomen moving outward.
4. As you exhale, move your belly button back toward your spine, and notice your hand moving inward.
5. Repeat three times, and pay attention to any shifts in your body and your level of relaxation.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. In which relationships do you find it challenging to tune in?
 - a. Family
 - b. Boss/colleague
 - c. Doctor
 - d. Neighbor
 - e. Other _____

2. In what situations do you find yourself *reacting* instead of *responding*?
 - a. On a tight deadline
 - b. While receiving feedback from another
 - c. When you are tired or hungry
 - d. In the face of strong emotion
 - e. Other _____

3. What activities help you feel most grounded?
 - a. Physical activity (hiking, running, yoga, surfing, etc.)
 - b. Social engagements (dinner with friends, coffee with your cousin, or parties with co-workers, etc.)
 - c. Quiet times (meditation, reading, alone time, etc.)
 - d. Nature
 - e. Other _____

4. When do you find yourself *reacting* instead of *responding*?
 - a. When you're not feeling well
 - b. When you're in a hurry
 - c. When you're not getting what you want
 - d. When you're interacting with family
 - e. Other _____

5. Which version of the pause button will you try during your next conversation: soft-belly breathing, grounding your body, or tensing and releasing? Other?

Chapter 5

Mixed Messages

Your body is constantly gathering data from your internal and external worlds. When those two worlds match and words, tone, and body language send the same message, the resulting communication is authentic, clear, and direct. If the primary elements of communication are not in harmony with one another, you end up giving or receiving a mixed message.

Making sure the method of delivery matches the level of importance of a conversation is key for successful communication. And if something doesn't go quite right, start with curiosity about how gathering additional information could create a different outcome.

TALKRx TOOLS

[MY *(internal + external) data* + your *(internal + external) data*]
X MANY WAYS TO DELIVER A MESSAGE =
lots of opportunity for miscommunication

Back-on-Track Tool

When there's a communication breakdown, ask yourself three key questions:

1. How did I know there was a communication breakdown?
2. Did the method equal the importance?
3. Did I send a mixed message?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

Take a moment to recall a recent miscommunication. Then answer the following questions.

1. How did you know there was a communication breakdown? External data? Internal signals?

2. Did you use your pause button? If not, how might it have helped you?

3. Did the method equal the importance?

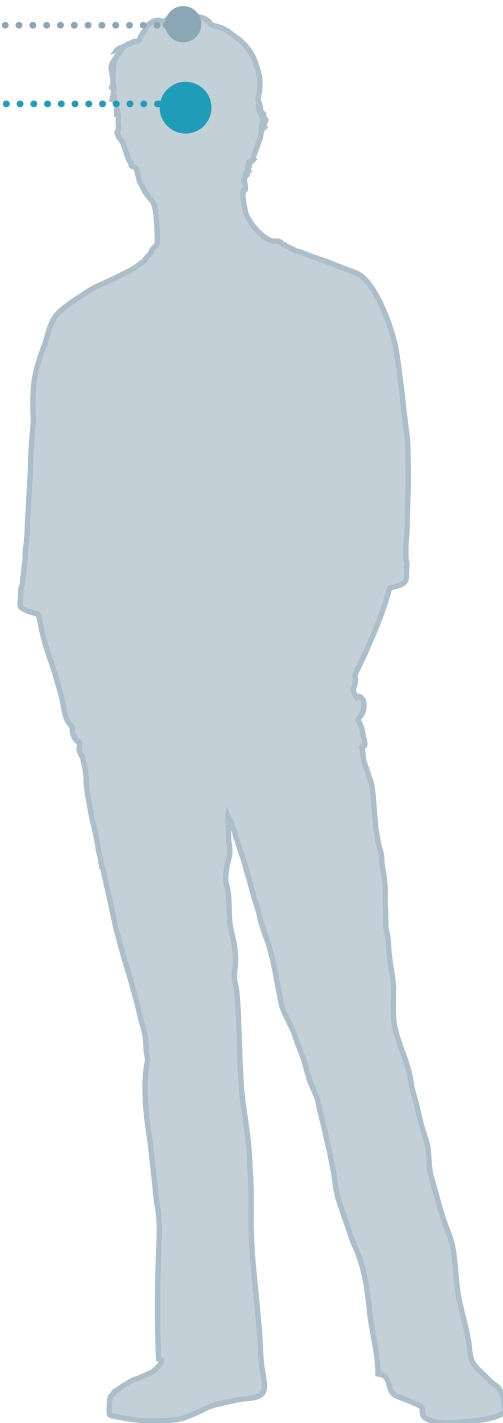
4. Did you send a mixed message? If so, what contributed to that?

5. What would you do differently next time?

STEP 2: Interpreting Your Thoughts

interpreting your
THOUGHTS

BODY.....



Chapter 6

Fact Versus Fiction

Your thoughts have the power to influence your body's physiology. When you take in objective data, your brain interprets what the information means, creating your unique perspective (beliefs, judgments and opinions). This is influenced by your upbringing and past experiences. Before you get too attached to being "right," it's important to separate fact from fiction. This is where your pause button will come in handy. It's time to address the stories in your head!

TALKRx TOOLS

Data + your unique perspective =
THE STORY YOU MAKE UP

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What are your thoughts on divorce?
 - a. Not an option
 - b. Sometimes necessary
 - c. Inevitable
 - d. Kids these days don't understand the value of commitment
 - e. Other _____

2. What are your thoughts on sex before marriage?
 - a. As long as you really love each other
 - b. Morally inappropriate
 - c. Lighten up, everybody's doin' it
 - d. The more the better
 - e. Other _____

3. What are your thoughts on lending money to friends, or family?
 - a. No way, José!
 - b. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
 - c. People have helped me on my journey, I'm happy to help them.
 - d. How irresponsible that they can't manage their finances!
 - e. Other _____

4. Name the most common phrases you heard growing up (e.g., "Children are to be seen, but not heard" or "You can play as long as you don't make a mess").

5. What has influenced your perspective the most (family, culture, religion, siblings, mentors, events, past trauma, etc.)? Who were the main role models in your life?

Chapter 7 Mind Chatter

Recycled thought patterns can be hazardous to your health because when they no longer work, they cause stress and keep you stuck. Outdated thought patterns are strategies you learned when you were young. Back then they likely served the important function of protecting you, or helping you survive. Your circumstances have probably changed so it's time to re-evaluate how they are working for you now.

I call the silent conversations we have with ourselves mind chatter. These conversations can be about the world, others, or even about what we think of ourselves. Self-talk is the way you talk to yourself about *you*—and can expand or limit what you think is possible. Self-talk is one of the most powerful influences on your communication. It's a safe assumption that your own perspective is limited because there are as many perspectives as there are people. A two-part approach will expand your perspective: begin first with curiosity and then replace limiting thoughts with affirmations.

TALKRx TOOLS

OLD STORIES + THINKING I'M RIGHT =
limited perspectives + disconnection

CURIOSITY + AFFIRMATIONS =
expanded perspective + connection + belonging

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Based on your life's experience, what types of books, or movies do you most relate to? Horror films? Adventure? Tragedies? Dramas? Fairy tales? Comedy?

2. Describe any similarities between those stories and the thoughts in your head.

3. Fact vs. Fiction: Think of an interaction that left you feeling disconnected from another person.

- What did you observe or gather directly from the source (fact)?
- What story did you make up about it (may or may not be true—don't know yet)?
- How could curiosity expand your perspective?

4. Self-talk: Name one limiting and one expanding thought about yourself. Now, turn the limiting belief into an affirmation.

Limiting Belief: _____

Expanding Belief: _____

Limiting Belief turned into an Affirmation: _____

5. Name one recycled thought pattern that no longer serves you.

Chapter 8 Pointing the Finger

A natural reflex for many people is to blame someone else. Blame is deceptive because it seems to give you a “valid” reason for why you can't change, or shouldn't have to. Blame takes the form of personalization, or projection. Personalization is rooted in thoughts of *I must have done something wrong*, or *I am flawed*. Whereas projection is rooted in thoughts of *you did something wrong* or *you are flawed*. While blaming another may feel like a short-lived personal victory in the moment, long-term it creates a divide in your relationship. Whether you place blame on yourself, or on another, you still haven't gotten to the root of the problem.

TALKRx TOOLS

Pointing fingers + enlisting others in why you're right =
STALEMATE

PERSONALIZATION + PROJECTION =
infinite blame game

PERSONALIZATION =
disproportionately blaming yourself

PROJECTION =
disproportionately blaming others

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What relationships in your life are most prone to the blame game?

2. When did you recently use blame as a strategy in conversation?

3. In that situation, were you personalizing or projecting?

4. What type of outcome did that experience yield?

5. Do you feel more or less connected when you use blame as a strategy in your relationships?

Chapter 9 What Do You Mean—My Responsibility?

Accountability is getting curious about your part in a situation. Taking personal responsibility means becoming aware of your body’s signals, what you observed, and the stories you’ve made up—especially if you’ve shifted into blaming another person. Once you know how to get accountable in a conversation, you’ll be able to dramatically improve your everyday conversations.

Accountability language is key to communicating effectively. This happens when you use appropriate pronouns, avoid generalizations, speak from your own perspective—and stay curious about what you might be missing. By taking responsibility for your thoughts, you can open yourself to the possibility of creating new stories—and I mean ones that build strong relationships, reduce stress, and benefit your health.

TALKRx TOOLS

Personal Accountability Tool

1. What was my role in creating this outcome?
2. What did I say (or not say)?
3. What did I do (or not do)?
4. Did I generalize or misuse pronouns?
5. Was I using blame?
 - If yes, were you blaming yourself, or another person?
 - If you were personalizing, ask: What if this wasn’t about me?
 - If you were projecting, ask: What was my role in this?

You-Turn Tool

Instead of using “you” to blame someone else:

1. Use “I” to share what you observed.
2. Speak from your own perspective.
3. Then get curious.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

Bring to mind a recent situation or conversation that didn't have an ideal outcome. Then ask yourself these questions.

1. What did I observe (interpreting your body—internally and externally)?

2. What stories did I make up about what I observed (interpreting your thoughts)? What was my part in this interaction?

3. How did I phrase my language (any generalizations or misuse of pronouns)?

4. Suppose I might not have all the information, what could I get curious about?

5. How might this awareness help me in my everyday conversations?

Chapter 10

Listening—A Sound Discussion

Listening is a primary way we take in data and form stories in our heads. It's how we decide what we think in order to formulate a response. The depth of our listening determines the quality and quantity of data we gather. The i-Five Levels of Listening help us distinguish when we are listening to ourselves, or to someone else. Deeper levels of listening invite curiosity into the conversation, so we can improve communication, strengthen our relationships and save time.

TALKRx TOOLS

Level 1: Closed Listening (distracted/already know/don't care)

Level 2: Head Listening (planner/hijacker/one-two punch)

Level 3: Ear Listening (words only)*

Level 4: Heart Listening (words + emotions)*

Level 5: Open Listening (words + emotions + values)*

**Remember, no interrupting!*

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Now that we've defined the i-Five Levels of Listening, it's time to reassess the number you selected to describe your level of listening at the beginning of Chapter 10 in TalkRx. What level do you listen at most often?

1=Closed 2=Head 3=Ear 4=Heart 5=Open

Did your score stay the same or change? _____

2. Now bring to mind the best listener in your life. What does this person do, or say that indicates that they're listening?

3. What level of listener is that person?

1=Closed 2=Head 3=Ear 4=Heart 5=Open

4. At what level do you listen to them?

1=Closed 2=Head 3=Ear 4=Heart 5=Open

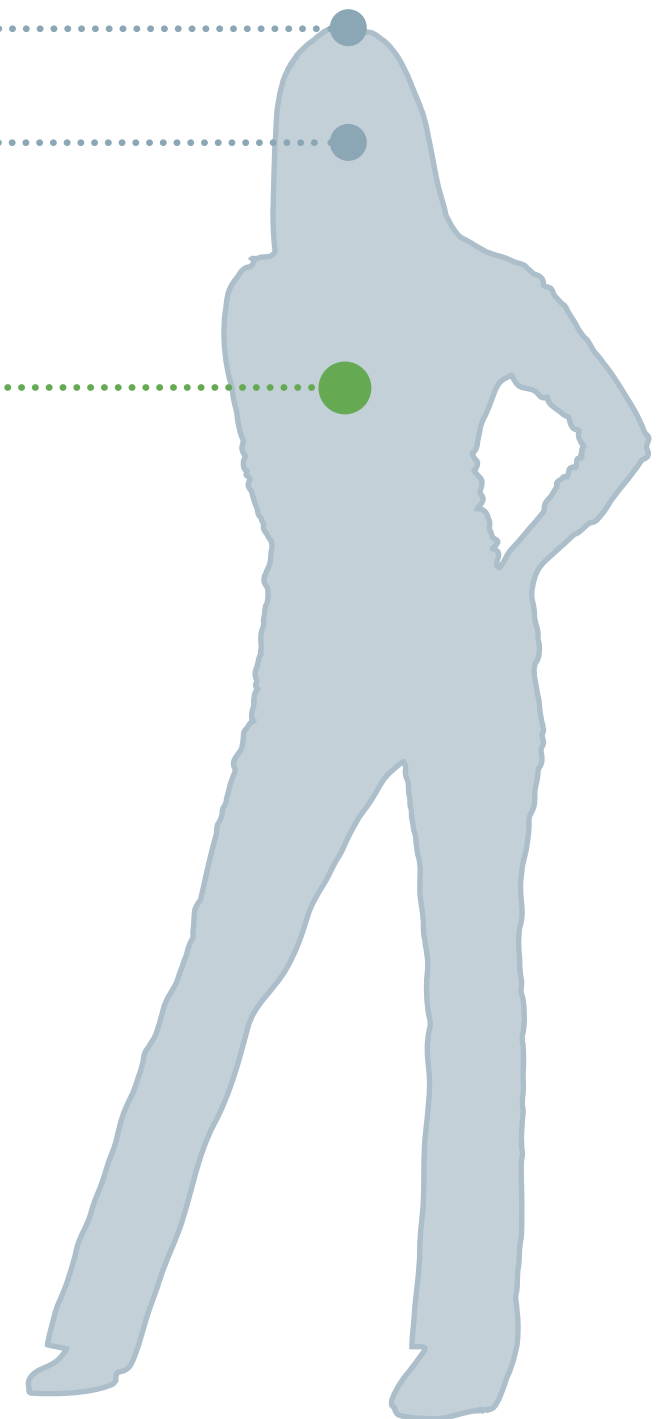
5. Ask someone close to you for feedback about how he or she would rate your listening skills.
(Warning: You might be surprised that how you rate yourself is often very different from how others would rate you as a listener.)

STEP 2: Interpreting Your Emotions

BODY.....●

THOUGHTS.....●

interpreting your
EMOTIONS.....●



Chapter 11

The Elephant in the Room

Emotion is a feeling or mood state that changes depending on what you observe and how you interpret what’s happening inside and around you. One way emotions are simple is that they can typically be described in one word. Expanding your emotional vocabulary allows you to identify and name emotions. An easy way to express emotions is by using a statement such as, “I feel + (a one-word emotion).” The practical tools from Emotions 101 make it easier to navigate emotionally charged situations. Once you couple this new awareness with curiosity, the combination will help you pave a path to your own heart and to those around you.

Heart Listening (Level 4) will result in more efficient and effective communication. Although empathy requires your presence and focus, it will save you time and energy while allowing you to create deeper connections. This type of listening combined with curiosity is the foundation for strong relationships.

TALKRx TOOLS

LEVEL 4: HEART LISTENING = *empathy + curiosity*

In emotionally charged situations, it’s important to listen below the words being said.

Listen for:

content
+
emotion

Respond with:

“You seem _____ (insert emotion).”
“You look _____ (insert emotion).”
“I can see how important this is to you.”

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Refer to the emotional vocabulary list (TalkRx Book p. 136), and write five emotions you experience most commonly.

2. Recall two one-word emotions you experience at family gatherings:

Comfortable emotion _____

Uncomfortable emotion _____

3. Use the emotional vocabulary list to describe those emotions with three alternative words.

Comfortable emotion

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Uncomfortable emotion

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. Think about a recent conversation when you didn’t feel heard (maybe you had to repeat yourself several times or the conversation felt disconnected). Name three underlying emotions you were experiencing.

5. Enlist a friend who would be willing to share one of his or her recent experiences and give you feedback on a new communication tool you've just learned. Use Heart Listening (listen for content and emotion), and respond using one of the statements below.

"You seem _____ (insert emotion). How can I help?"

"You look _____ (insert emotion). Does that seem right?"

"I can see how important this is to you. What can I do to best support you?"

Once you've responded, ask for feedback about whether he or she felt heard.

Chapter 12

A Family of Emotions

When emotions get intense, the volume of the physical signals in our bodies also becomes more intense. To make things more complicated, seemingly opposite emotions can coexist. To top it off, when we see uncomfortable emotion being expressed by someone else, it can also mirror an experience in us. Several myths about strong emotion lead people to stuff their feelings. But once you understand what's happening underneath, it becomes easier to lean into discomfort of emotion and allow it to move through you.

Since our brains are wired to seek pleasure and avoid pain, dealing with intense emotions isn't always easy. Your memories of emotionally charged experiences are stored in your amygdala. And your amygdala sits next to your thalamus and eavesdrops on incoming data. When your amygdala recognizes an incoming experience as resembling an earlier trauma, your amygdala hijacks the data before it can reach the thinking part of your brain. This is likely the culprit of an out-of-proportion response to a seemingly benign event (surprising you and those around you).

TALKRx TOOLS

When you feel conflicted in a situation, make sure you acknowledge the entire family of emotions involved.

Emotions you like + emotions you don't like =

YOUR FAMILY OF EMOTIONS

AMYGDALA HIJACK

(an out-of-proportion response to what's happening)

= *thalamus (the hub for incoming data) –*

frontal cortex (ability to make sense of it)

The Hijack Recovery Tool

When you get hijacked, then what?

1. Hit your pause button.
2. Get curious, not furious!
3. Ask yourself:
 - What does experience remind me of?
 - When have I felt similarly?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Describe a recent situation in which you felt stressed.

2. Write three more specific emotions that would more accurately describe the emotions contributing to your stress in that situation.

3. Think of a situation when seemingly opposite emotions coexisted for you. Name them.

4. What was challenging about that experience?

5. Have you ever been hijacked (amygdala-hijacked, that is) or witnessed someone else having a strong reaction that seemed out of proportion to what was happening? If so, describe that experience.

Chapter 13

Raining Down

There seems to be a universal discomfort with tears, not only physically, but also in relation to the stories we've made up about them. Somewhere along the way, tears have become associated with being weak or inappropriate. Tears are often described as annoying or as overly emotional behavior. Unfortunately, these stories can lead us to hide our emotions in order to avoid uncomfortable situations or the fear of being judged by others.

There are three types of tears: continuous, reflexive, and emotional. Continuous tears keep our eyes moist on a daily basis. Reflexive tears flush out foreign particles from our eyes. Emotional tears are unique because they literally expel stress hormones from the body. An expanded perspective reveals that tears represent a variety of feelings—grief, joy and relief—and allowing those emotions to move through us is a big part of what help us heals.

TALKRx TOOLS

Expressing Your Tears Tool

In response to *your own* tears, follow these three simple steps:

- Identify the emotion(s) underneath the tears.
- Name what triggered the emotion.
- State what you need—if anything (time, space, support . . . a hug!).

Here are some ways to respond:

- “I feel hurt, and I’m not sure why. I need some time.”
- “Wow! I am so happy. This means a lot to me. We should celebrate.”
- “I’m relieved. At least now I know the truth. I need time to make a decision.”

Responding to Tears Tool

In response to *another person’s* tears:

- Hit your pause button (breathe).
- Acknowledge his or her emotion.
- Get curious about what he or she needs.

Here are some ways to respond:

- “I see how important this is to you. How can I help?”
- “I hear your pain. How can I best support you?”
- “I hear how deeply this has touched you. Is there any way I can be of assistance?”

If you aren’t sure how to express yourself in a tearful moment, ask yourself:

- “If my tears could talk, what would they say?”

If *someone else* hasn’t expressed what’s causing his tears, you can ask:

- “If your tears could talk, what would they say?”

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Growing up, what were the circumstances under which crying was acceptable or unacceptable?

2. What stories have you made up about expressing your own tears?

3. What stories have you made up about other people expressing tears?

4. What do you say or do in the face of your own or someone else's tears?

5. Has your perspective of tears changed by reading chapter 13 (Raining Down) of *TalkRx*? If so, how?

Chapter 14 Taming the Volcano Within

Anger is an instinctive and natural emotion that each of us experiences at some point in our lives. Anger has its root in other emotions, mainly hurt or fear. While anger can motivate change and promote justice, uncontrolled anger can result in great harm to others as well as oneself. This is why it's so important to examine your individual relationship to anger.

The physical effects of chronic and poorly managed anger can negatively impact your health. The ability to pause and listen deeply (to yourself and others) before reacting can open the door to compassion and forgiveness. Transforming anger will lead to less stress and deeper connection.

TALKRx TOOLS

Expressing Your Anger Tool

In response to your anger, follow these simple steps:

1. State what's happening.
2. Then ask for what you need.

Examples of how to articulate this are:

"I feel myself reacting; I'd like to talk about it."

"I can feel myself shutting down. I need to go for a run."

"I'm not in the right frame of mind to continue this conversation. I need time."

Responding to Anger Tool

In response to another person's anger, follow these simple steps:

1. State what you observe (if something has physically changed).
2. Name the underlying emotion.
3. Get curious.

Examples of how to articulate this are:

"I can see how upset you are. How can I best support you?"

“I hear your frustration. What happened?”

“Your tone has changed, and you’ve gotten quiet. Are you angry?”

Self-Forgiveness Tool

**Are you ready to give up all hope of a better past? If yes, proceed.
If no, you’re not ready.**

1. Acknowledge the physical sensations telling you something needs to be healed.
2. Take a deep breath and thank your body for communicating with you.
3. Ask yourself:
 - “Did I do the best I knew how with the knowledge and awareness I had at the time?”
 - “When I knew better, did I do better?”
4. In your journal, write the answers to the statements that apply:
 - The impact of getting angry with myself has been . . .
 - What I wanted for myself that I didn’t get was . . .
 - I’ve wrongly blamed myself for . . .
 - If I apologized to myself, I would say . . .
 - If I acknowledged that I did the best I knew how with what I knew at the time and treated myself with compassion and forgiveness, I would . . .
5. Express:
 - What you wanted to say (or apologize for) to yourself.
 - What will be different moving forward.

Forgiving Another Tool

1. Become aware of your body’s signals telling you something needs to be healed.
2. Take a deep breath and thank your body for communicating with you.
3. Ask yourself:
 - “Did this person do the best they knew how with the knowledge and awareness they had at the time?”

4. In your journal, answer the statements that apply:

- The impact of this relationship on me has been . . .
- What I wanted from you that I didn’t get was . . .
- What I’ve always wanted to tell you is . . .
- The ways I’ve held back are . . .
- If I believed you did the best you could with what you knew at the time and treated you with compassion and forgiveness, I would . . .

5. Express:

- What you need to say to the person directly, or
- Have a friend stand in for this person and listen deeply.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. If you gave a name to your relationship with anger, what would it be (e.g., running scared, the big bad bully, my way or the highway)?

2. How do you dance with anger? Do you tend to express or suppress it?

3. What are the top three stories you've made up about anger in general? Your anger? Another person's anger?

4. When you are angry, which emotion is most often underlying it—pain or fear?

5. Who in your life do you need to forgive? What do you need to forgive yourself for?

Chapter 15 The Sky Is Not Falling

Anxiety is rooted in fear. This fear can manifest in many ways, but the result is the same—an unsuccessful attempt at controlling what's to come. A common way we create anxious thoughts is by using *what if* + catastrophic thinking about topics such as money, relationships, career, politics, the economy, the stock market, aging, death, and the general declining state of the world.

Anxiety is clinically categorized three ways: generalized anxiety, phobias, and panic attacks. Underlying anxiety is a lack of self-trust to handle uncertainty. When experiencing a loss of control, anxiety is often an attempt to create order out of perceived chaos. This process causes your body to endure a repetitive triggering of the stress response that, over time, takes a toll on your relationships and your health.

An easy way to relieve anxiety is to get present in your body. Pay attention to the thoughts running in your head, and notice if they are about controlling the future. Get curious about what you know are facts, and let go of your scary *what if* thoughts.

TALKRx TOOLS

Back From the Future Tool

1. Get present (soft belly breathing + ground your body).
2. Name that fear:
 - a. What I'm most afraid of is...
 - b. What if...(your fears)
3. Expand your perspective:
 - a. Ask yourself, "Is what I'm afraid of really true in this moment?"
 - b. Right here, right now, what is true is...
4. Create an affirmation (refer to p. 88 in TalkRx):
 - a. Turn around your fear. Ask yourself, what is the opposite of this?
 - b. Create an "I am..." statement that supports an ideal outcome.
5. Ask yourself, what would self-trust and courage do now?

Expressing Your Anxiety Tool

- State what you observe.
- Name the emotion.
- Ask for what you need.
- Ask yourself: what would self-trust and courage do now?

Here are some ways to respond:

“I’m going to miss my flight. I’m worried. Give me a few minutes to calm down. And I’ll figure out what’s next.”

“I can feel my heart racing. I’m scared the package won’t arrive on time. Can you please send a second copy of the materials directly to my home as well? At least I’ll have a backup plan.”

“I’m anxious about what other people are going to think. Instead I’m going to trust myself and focus on doing my best for the audience.”

Responding to Anxiety Tool

- Breathe and ground yourself first.
- Shift into level 4: Heart Listening.
- Name the emotion.
- Get curious.

Here are some ways to respond:

“I hear how concerned you are. How can I help?”

“I see how worried you are. What do you need?”

“I can tell this is anxiety-provoking. How can I be of support?”

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What physical signals does anxiety evoke in you (heart racing, stomach turning, jaw clenching, etc.)?

2. What are your repetitive worries? (Hint: they usually start with *What if...*)

What if... _____

What if... _____

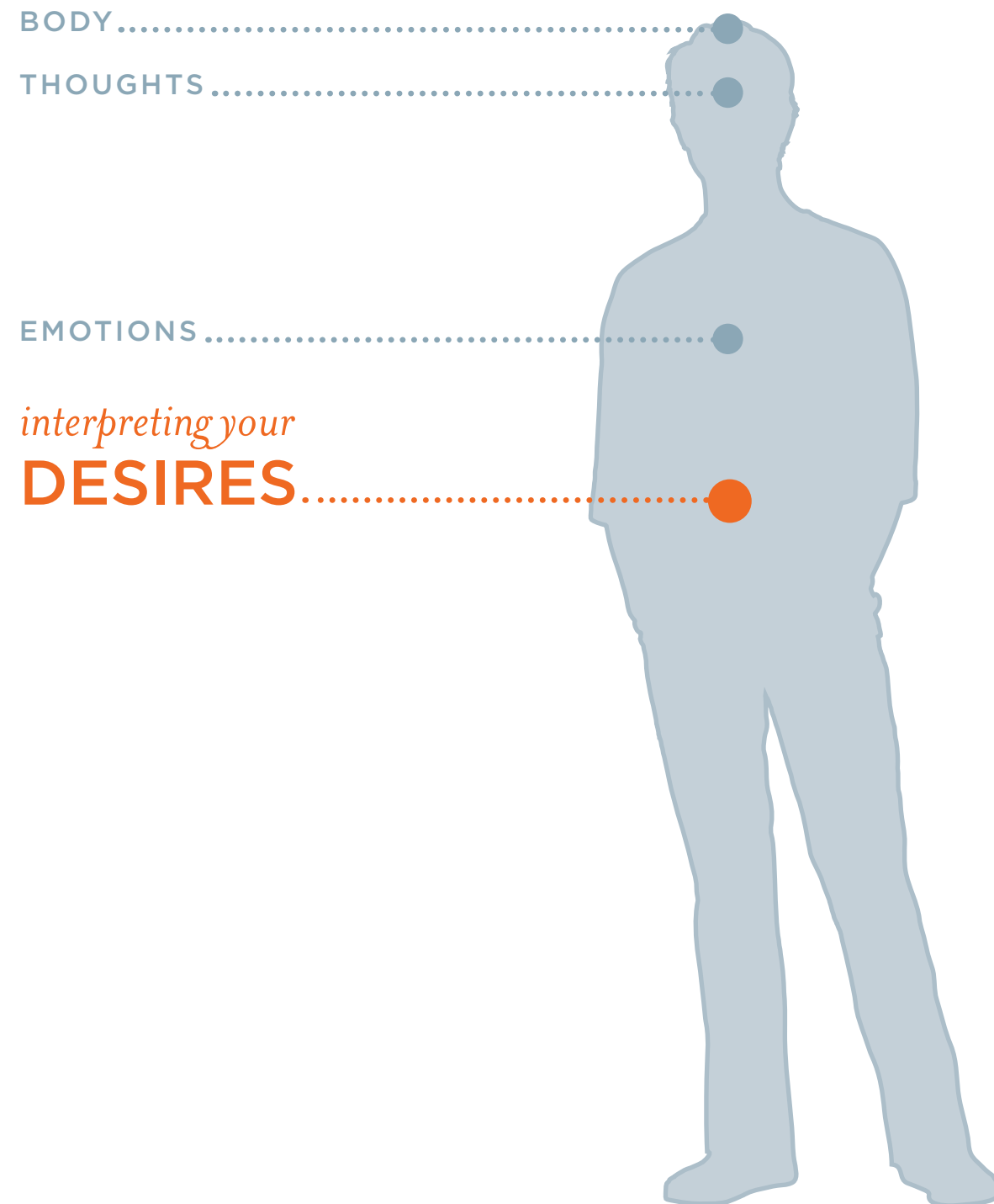
What if... _____

3. How would you describe your relationship to anxiety? Is it motivating or paralyzing?

4. What about your relationship to other people’s anxiety?

5. Think of the last time you felt an uncomfortable emotion, such as tears, anger, or anxiety. How did you handle that experience? Would you have handled it differently if you had asked yourself, “What would self-trust and courage do now?”

STEP 4: Interpreting Your Desires



Chapter 16

The Consequences of Not Knowing

Your body, thoughts, emotions, and desires work together to create an accurate navigation system that directs you on the path toward the life you want. Many people make the mistake of not knowing their desires, and focusing only on what they *don't* want (rather than what they *do* want). Knowing what you *don't* want usually comes from a place of fear, self-doubt, or self-protection. This can steer you temporarily away from discomfort but doesn't move you toward your deepest desires. Only love, courage, and self trust will allow you to risk reaching for what you dream of.

While you can wish well for another, wanting for someone else is a futile and frustrating experience. To move toward understanding and improved relationships, focus on getting clear about what *you* want first. Focusing *only* on yourself is selfish. Focusing on yourself first is not—it's self-full. Being self-full will result in you knowing what you want and the ability to express yourself clearly while balancing the desires of others to create strong relationships.

TALKRx TOOL

Get What You Want Tool

To figure out your desires, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is it that I *do* want rather than what I *don't* want?
2. Am I coming from a place of fear or love?
3. Am I focusing on myself or another?

If you are focusing on yourself, then skip to question 4.

If not, answer the following:

- a. What am I trying to achieve?
- b. What am I trying to protect myself from?
- c. What am I trying to change so I can be more comfortable, happy, peaceful (or whatever your desire is)?
- d. Assuming the other person's behavior or circumstance remains the same, what do I want for myself in this situation?
4. If I get what I want, how will I feel?
5. If I get what I want, what will it give me?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Name three things you don't want.

2. Turn those statements around, and rephrase them as what you *do* want.

3. Who in your life do you find yourself wanting for most? How well has that been working? If nothing changes for the other person, what do you want for yourself in this situation?

4. What challenging emotions keep you stuck (in the past) and prevent you from moving toward what you desire most (the future)?

5. Name one way you could become more self-full.

Chapter 17

20/20 Vision

You have needs, and you have wants. What's the difference? Needs are often required for survival. Wants, on the other hand, usually describe an external goal, accomplishment, item, or an internal state of being. Wants and needs are interconnected, providing important clues about what you desire and value most.

Values are the driving force behind what's important to you—what you'll invest your time, energy and money in. You can usually name values with one word. Various words can represent the same value. Multiple values can fuel a single desire. A easy way to identify what you value is by noticing what you admire in others. Once your highest values are clear, your priorities will come into focus and allow you to make decisions more easily.

Notice your physical signals, thoughts, and emotions that arise as you read the values vocabulary list (TalkRx Book p. 216–217), paying attention to what's most important, and take note of any values you feel resistance toward. Those values are often your hidden values. It may take you a little extra curiosity and effort to figure out why they are important to you.

TALKRx TOOLS

Value Discovery Tool

1. Bring to mind a close friend or public figure you admire.
2. Identify three qualities that you appreciate about him or her.
3. Describe how these qualities reflect what's important to you.

Two-Step Decision-Making Tool

Ask yourself:

1. Does this request, opportunity, or idea support my highest values?
2. Am I making this decision out of inspiration or obligation?

The answer:

Yes—if it aligns with my values and inspires me.

No—if it doesn't align with my values (even if I am inspired and want to do it).

Maybe So—if it aligns with my values, but feels more like an obligation (pay close attention to how many decisions fall in this category).

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Read the values vocabulary list, and place a check mark next to the ones that resonate with you. Then list the top 10 here.

2. Pick three of the values, and then describe each with two alternate words.

3. Did you notice resistance toward any values? If so, what are the stories you're making up about that value?

4. For the next week, document what people, interactions, tasks, and conversations give you energy and which ones drain you of energy.

5. Think of a recent decision, and run it through the two-step decision-making tool. Given this new information, would you still have made the same decision?

Chapter 18 Love and Gratitude

Some desires are universal, such as wanting to be appreciated and loved. The key is to identify which ways you feel most loved or appreciated, and let others know what's most important to you. In order to connect successfully with others, you must pay attention to how they receive love. Then give to them in that love language.

Even though you know that love comes in many forms, be careful because you may unknowingly block what you want most. When someone expresses love or appreciation, it may trigger an old thought pattern or discomfort and shyness. The resulting defensive move—while protective in nature—can deflect the compliment or gesture, resulting in disconnection from the other person.

Just like oxygen and your breath, gratitude is one of the most abundant, low-cost, high-yield, effective strategies to expand your perspective and refocus on what's most important. When you feel stuck, make sure you find a creative method to focus your body, thoughts, emotions, and desires on what you're grateful for. Gratitude changes your perspective and reconnects you to yourself as well as others so you can let love in.

TALKRx TOOLS

Gary Chapman's Five Love Languages

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality Time
3. Gifts
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch

Letting-Love-In Tool

1. Notice your physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions in response to the gesture.
2. Take a soft belly breath (or three).
3. Say, "Thank you."
4. Identify which love language this person is using.
5. Take in the gesture as an expression of love.

Gratitude Practices

1. Verbal expression
2. Written expression (cards, emails, tweets, emoticons)
3. Affirmations (reframing your thoughts)
4. Gratitude journal (write three things you're grateful for each night)
5. The Gratitude Dance
 - a. Find a song with a steady, rhythmic beat.
 - b. Move and shake your body for three minutes to release any stuck emotions.
 - c. When the music stops, check in to your body, and notice any sensations.
 - d. Play an inspirational song next.
 - e. Allow yourself to move freely, and fill your mind and heart with all the reasons you're grateful.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Reflect on a time when you felt really appreciated or loved. What specifically made that experience feel special? This will give you clues about the ways you best receive love.

2. What are the stories you make up about giving or receiving compliments, recognition, and appreciation? How are they stopping you from getting the love and appreciation you want?

3. What's your best defensive move to deflect incoming love and appreciation?

4. What emotions do you typically experience in response to letting or *not* letting love in?

5. Think of one person that you're grateful for and tell them. Who comes to mind immediately?

An attitude of gratitude is contagious. As you prepare for your next conversation, set gratefulness as one of your intentions for your internal state of being. Then, begin your interaction with a statement such as, "I appreciate when you..." or "I want you to know how much it means to me when you (say or do)..."

Chapter 19

Finding Common Ground

Even when we have similar values, we still may find it challenging to connect. Often this occurs because we make assumptions that the way we receive love or appreciation is the same way others do. One of the biggest mistakes people make is offering appreciation to others in the same way they are most comfortable receiving it. If you're not getting the response you hope for, then get curious about how the other person best receives love and appreciation.

It's easy to get frustrated when someone else isn't giving you what you want. But when you want something (badly), before you demand it of another, try giving it away first!

TALKRx TOOLS

The Secret

If you want something, give it away first.

Deciphering the Language of Love

To give and receive appreciation:

1. Identify two ways you feel most appreciated. (Let the people close to you know what they are.)
2. Notice the ways that other people give love.
3. Give to others in the way they receive—not the way you do!

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Who are you waiting for to change—so that you can get what you want?

2. Who do you wish would value you more?

3. How do you express your love and appreciation to that person?

4. What holds you back from giving away what you want most?

5. Choose a relationship you would like to be stronger. Then show appreciation to that person in *his* or *her* love language once a day for a week. Watch the magic happen and document it here!

Chapter 20

The Communication Tango

Knowing what you desire and value prepares you for any conversation and helps you avoid common missteps. Listening to yourself and to others will allow you to gain clarity. Once you're clear, sharing these desires with others will give you a better chance of getting what you want.

Open Listening (Level 5: Open Listening) is when you listen deeply—beneath the words and emotions to hear what the other person values. It requires paying attention to the words (content), tone and body language (emotions), while listening for what's most important to the other person. In this level of listening it's important to listen to what's *not being said* by being aware of silence and pauses in conversation. Curiosity is always a part of levels 3, 4, and 5 listening. Be patient; this type of listening takes some practice. But once you get the hang of it, it's a game changer!

TALKRx TOOLS

LEVEL 5: OPEN LISTENING =
words + emotions + values

Level 5: Open Listening

Open Listening Exercise with a Partner

1. Set a timer for three minutes and open *TalkRx* to the values vocabulary (p. 216-217).
2. Ask a friend to tell you about a meaningful experience.
(Let that person speak uninterrupted.)
3. Tell your friend what you heard he or she values.
4. Get curious to see if your answers resonate with him or her.
5. Ask if there were any other values that you didn't mention.

Open Listening Exercise on Your Own

1. Recall a peak experience, milestone, or fond memory.
2. Write a description of the experience.
3. Reread what you've written with the Values Vocabulary List in front of you.
4. Choose three values that underlie your story.
5. Share your values with someone else.

Rules of the Communication Tango

1. Determine your desires.
2. Choose your internal state of being.
3. Shift to an *and* mind-set.
4. You can ask for anything you want (it doesn't mean they have to give it to you).
5. Others can ask for anything they want (it doesn't mean you have to give it to them).

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Circle what level of listener you are most of the time.

1 2 3 4 5

2. When is the last time you hoped for something but didn't ask for it out loud? What were the stories you made up in your head about why you couldn't say it out loud? What was the outcome?

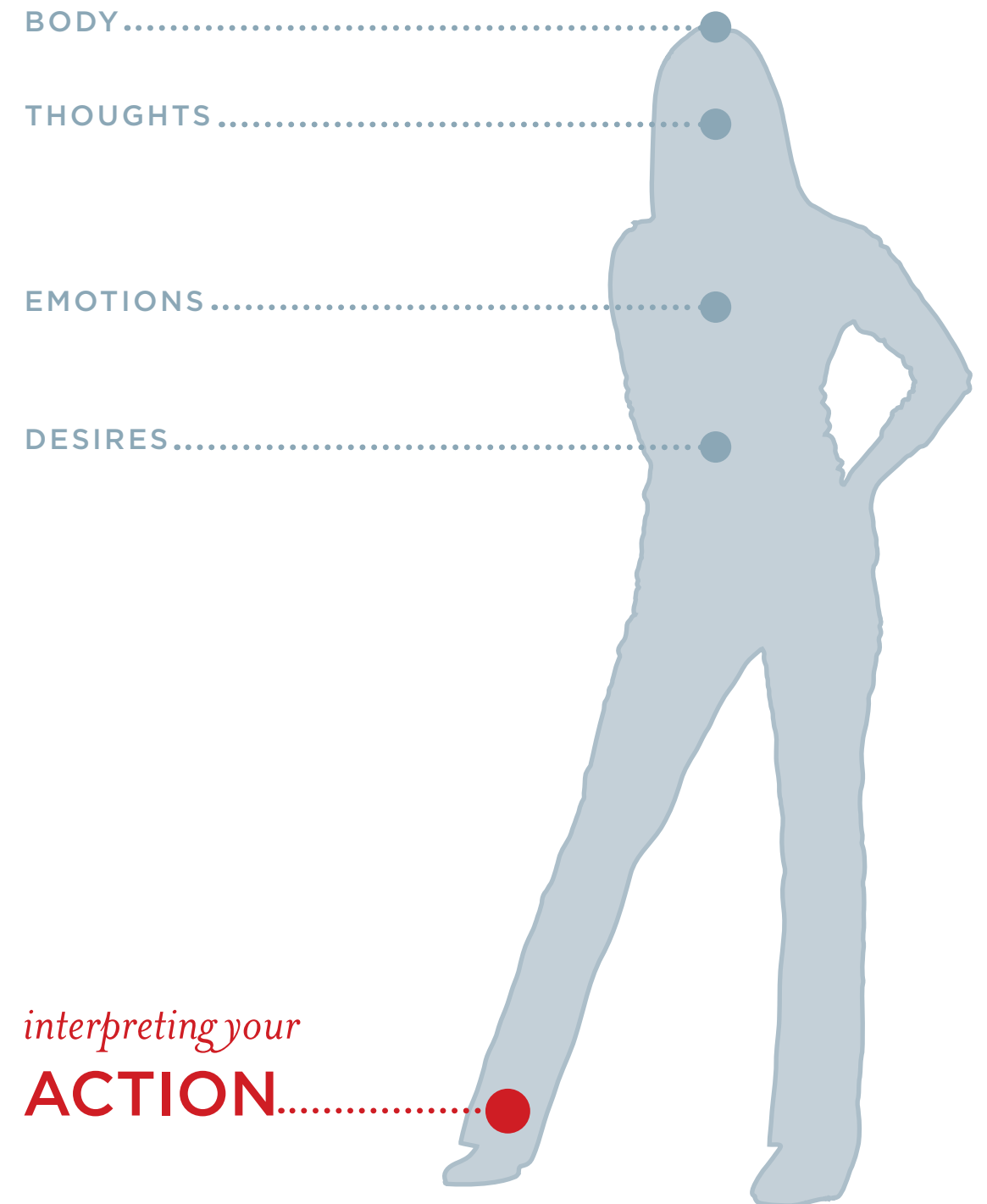
3. Ideally, how would you like to show up in conversation (curious, as an open listener, compassionate, genuine, patient, kind, etc.)?

4. The next time you're stumped, ask yourself, "What would [insert your values here] do now?" (And then trust the answer). Insert your highest values, and write your version here.

Eg. For me, what would love, integrity and service do now?

5. Bring someone to mind with whom you find it a challenge to communicate. On a scale of 1-5, what level of listener are you with them? How might the quality of your relationship change if you listened with Level 5: Open Listening? Give it a try in your next conversation and document the outcome.

STEP 5: Integrating into Action



Chapter 21

He Said, She Said

We make agreements all the time; they range from informal everyday commitments to legal binding contracts. As you put your learning into action, it's important to understand what makes a solid agreement. Now you know about the five levels of agreement.

The problem is that assumptions, competing intentions, and unspoken desires can lead to missed expectations, broken agreements, and disappointment. This is where the he said–she said dilemmas often originate. When there is a discrepancy between agreements, the lowest level of agreement wins. So it's important to examine the level of agreement you think you have versus the one you actually have.

TALKRx TOOL

The Five Levels of Agreement

Level 1—Acknowledgement

Level 2—Positive interest

Level 3—Qualified yes

Level 4—Clear yes (no details)

Level 5—Clear yes + details confirmed

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. In what settings do you find it easier to create effective agreements—at work or at home?

2. With whom in particular do you find it most challenging to create agreements—your parents, siblings, partner, boss, co-workers, friends, or others?

3. What level agreements do you typically expect from others? Give to others?

4. Are those two numbers different? If so, how might this be causing difficulty in your communication?

5. What level of agreement do you make and keep with yourself?

Chapter 22

Prep for Success

Your body, thoughts, emotions, and desires will clue you in to when it's time to initiate a dialogue. An easy way to distinguish when to involve another person is by noticing patterns of behavior and paying attention to how much of your mental real estate is being occupied by a particular situation. With a few quick tips, it's easy to know when it is time to have a conversation and how to set your conversations up for success.

TALKRx TOOLS

How you know it's time to initiate a conversation

Three-Time Rule

- First time:** Notice and get clear about your reaction to what just happened.
- Second time:** Store it in your mental filing cabinet (potentially becoming a pattern).
- Third time:** Ask for a conversation.

Sunrise Rule

If you find yourself awake in the middle of the night thinking about an interaction, or it's the first thing on your mind in the morning, it's time to talk.

The i-Five Setup (setting up conversations for success)

- 1. Topic:** What would you like to talk about?
- 2. Time:** How much time do you need?
- 3. Attention:** When is a good time for the other person?
- 4. How:** Choose a method of delivery that matches equals the level of importance of the conversation.
- 5. Where:** What setting would create the best environment for this interaction, public or private?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What have you observed? What signals or patterns tell you that something is "off"?

2. When in past situations, have you ignored the Three-Time Rule or the Sunrise Rule? What was the impact?

3. What keeps you from addressing difficult conversations? Is there anything you're afraid of?

4. How could setting up your conversations for success improve your interactions with others?

5. Practice prepping for success below—by answering the questions in the i-Five Setup for a conversation you need to have.

Topic: _____

Time: _____

Attention: _____

How: _____

Where: _____

Chapter 23

Learning to Trust

Your body, thoughts, emotions, and desires greatly influence one another. Even when you're integrating those four components into action, you may experience competing intentions. If you're brave enough to ask yourself the tough questions and get clear, you'll be ready to take bold action when necessary. And remember, you can't be courageous and comfortable at the same time.

TALKRx TOOL

The Awareness Prescription

- Why this?
- Why now?
- What might you have missed?
- What else needs to be healed?
- If you spoke from the heart, what would you say?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. How does the community you surround yourself with influence how you feel and act?

2. Under what circumstances, do you ignore the messages from your heart?

3. What competing intentions or values lead to that choice?

4. What conversations have you been putting off that you know you need to have?

5. When have you listened to your own heart and taken action? What was that experience like?

Chapter 24

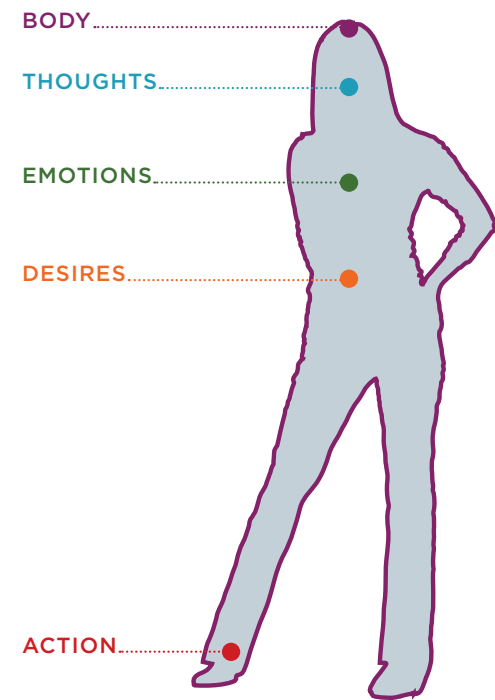
The i-Five Conversation

The art of having an i-Five Conversation works in everyday situations as well as challenging ones. A few important points to remember: You need to manage yourself, be specific about what you've observed, take personal accountability, get curious, and listen deeply. There's a big difference between reacting with statements of blame versus responding with ownership. When you show up with accountability and curiosity, you dissolve barriers and have the best opportunity to find common ground. Having an i-Five Conversation reduces stress, improves your health and your relationships—all while saving you time. When's the last time someone promised you that?

TALKRx TOOL

i-Five Conversation

- Interpreting Your Body
- Interpreting Your Thoughts
- Interpreting Your Emotions
- Interpreting Your Desires
- Integrating Into Action



i-FIVE CONVERSATION =
clear, concise communication + less stress
 = *strong connections + healthy, happy you*

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What elements of the i-Five Conversation come naturally to you?

2. What elements do you most frequently leave out?

3. What's the consequence of doing so?

4. What have you learned about your own communication that will help you become a more effective communicator?

5. With your next opportunity to use the i-Five Conversation, journal about your confidence level, your effectiveness and whether it saves you time and gets you more of what you want.

Chapter 25

Surrender

No matter how well you execute an i-Five Conversation, or how hard you try, you may discover that you cannot find common ground with someone else. You may have grown apart or there may no longer be overlap in your desires. As a result, the outcome of a well-constructed conversation may not be what you hoped for.

In the end, it's not about always getting the outcome you want; it's about aligning your choices with what you value and speaking honestly from your heart. Sometimes that requires surrender—intentionally letting go of trying to control the situation, outcome, or relationship. In the short term, you may feel loss and uncertainty. But in the long term, if you surrender to the outcome and stay true to your highest values, you'll be heading in the right direction—aligned with your heart.

TALKRx TOOLS

Steps to Surrender

1. Notice where in your body you feel attachment to this behavior, relationship, experience, or object.
2. Take in a deep breath, and imagine oxygen moving into that area of your body.
3. As you exhale, visualize releasing what no longer serves you. You might picture it dissolving, evaporating, melting, or washing away.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 as you continue to let go and allow any emotions to move through you.
5. Invite gratitude, self-trust, and healing in. Become aware of the space you've created for something new.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. What have you been trying to control or not letting go of?

2. How has that particular behavior, relationship, job, or community served you (e.g., protection, brought happiness, met a need)? What's the price of continuing to be attached to it?

3. What physical signals arise at the thought of letting go of this? Close your eyes and tune in to what physical sensations your body is sending (location, quality and intensity of the signals).

4. What emotions arise at the thought of letting it go?

5. If you let this go, what will you be creating space for?

Resources

Visit [DoctorNehaTalkRx.com](https://www.doctorneha.com) for free resources and additional materials that will help you master the i-Five Conversation.

- **Blogs**—find inspiration for everyday conversations
- **Podcasts**—listen as you drive, walk, or work out
- **Videos**—get up close and personal with my clients as I work with them live
- **Doctor Neha's Library**—my favorite authors to complement your TalkRx journey
- **Doctor Neha's Rolodex**—the practitioners, organizations and services that I recommend

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Also join the online conversation at [DoctorNehaTalkRx.com](https://www.doctorneha.com) to connect with other readers, ask questions, post comments, and share thoughts. I'd love to hear from you!

To book Dr. Neha Sangwan to speak at your event or offer leadership and corporate trainings, please contact her team at hello@doctorneha.com.

About the Author

CEO and founder of Intuitive Intelligence, Dr. Neha Sangwan is a first-generation American who grew up believing there were only two career choices: engineering or medicine. As soon as she realized they weren't mutually exclusive, she pursued them both.

However, she's not your typical scientist. Her entrepreneurial spirit has led her to combine the science of medicine with the art of communication. With practical tools, she empowers individuals, leaders, and organizations to communicate clearly, strengthen relationships, reduce stress, improve health and save time.

Doctor Neha earned her Bachelor of Science in mechanical and biomedical engineering from Michigan State University. She worked as a manufacturing engineer for Motorola before attending medical school at the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo). She completed her Internal Medicine residency at Temple University Hospital and became board certified. She worked as a hospitalist until burnout forced her to pay attention to her own health and healing. Only then was she able to diagnose and treat her own limiting beliefs about medicine and her traditional role as a physician. With the help of thousands of patients, she discovered that physical ailments aren't always rooted in a physical cause. Upon leaving her physician partnership at one of the country's largest health maintenance organizations, she founded her own company, Intuitive Intelligence, to educate and inspire others. In her private practice, Doctor Neha addresses the root cause of stress, miscommunication, and interpersonal conflict. This approach often heals chronic conditions such as headaches, insomnia, anxiety, and depression.

As a speaker, author, and coach, Doctor Neha has shared her discoveries on the stages of TEDx Berkeley ("The Communication Cure") and TEDx San Luis Obispo ("The Community Cure"). She speaks for and partners with organizations such as the American Heart Association, American Express, Kaiser Permanente, and Google. She also enjoys teaching annual retreats for the public at Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health.

Join Doctor Neha on the path to bridge the gap between health and communication at www.doctorneha.com.

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