

# Arise In Your Queen ATTRACT YOUR KING

## Imago Dialogue

I want to welcome you back Sister Queen to **Module 5 – True Partnership**

And today's lesson is called ***"Imago Dialogue"***

Let's start today with a quote:

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*Communication is the fuel that keeps the fire of your relationship burning, without it, your relationship goes cold ~*  
William Paisley

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### **Today you'll learn:**

1. What Is Imago Dialogue?
2. The Art of Seeing Things From Another's Point of View
3. Using Imago Dialogue In Communication

### **What Is Imago Dialogue?**

A Path to Bringing Down Emotional Walls

The Imago Dialogue is a unique and powerful communication tool that has been utilized by thousands of couples for over twenty five years. The Dialogue is built upon the premise that while we humans are designed to believe there is just one "reality" out there, (the one we perceive), the truth is, each person has their own unique reality, their own legitimate experience of the world and any given situation in it.

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*In Imago, the belief is that each individual's "reality" is just as valid as any other persons.*

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Emotional walls come up automatically when our brains sense danger.

Their purpose is to keep us safe, and in the short run, they do. Over time, though, they can become fixed and impenetrable so that even those desperate to connect will find it next to impossible to scale them.

Communication skills are critical to bringing our walls down.

By themselves, they may not break down all the barriers, but seldom can these be removed without them.

Sadly, despite how much we humans seem to require good communication to keep our relationships healthy, we don't seem particularly well designed to deliver it, and rarely does anyone teach us, yes? So, most of us need help, a little guidance.

### **Imago Dialogue: Is A simple path to restoring connection and empathy**

With practice, and used in the spirit in which it was intended, this simple tool can give you a way to actually sit down and talk about your issues, (even difficult ones), with a high degree of confidence that you and your partner will each leave that discussion feeling better heard and understood than when you began.

It is from this sense of renewed mutual understanding and empathy that leads partners to feel re-connected – this, in turn, opens the door to mutual and effective problem solving.

## **Instructions on HOW to do Imago Dialogue:**

### **The Basic Dialogue Ground Rule**

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*In the Imago Dialogue both parties agree to a basic ground rule: to talk one person at-a-time.*

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This gives you a person who is speaking, we say “sending”, and another who is listening, or “receiving”. It is when you are in the role of the Receiver that you will be doing the three main steps of Imago Dialogue.

### **The Three Main Steps Are:**

- Mirroring
- Validation
- Empathy

Let's take them one at a time in overview:

### **STEP ONE: Mirror**

In the Mirroring step, when your partner pauses, or perhaps when you have asked them to pause, you will repeat back everything you heard them say. You may paraphrase, but you will mirror without analyzing, critiquing, modifying or responding.

How to Mirror: "If I got it, I think you said..." or "So you're saying..." Next, ask if there's more: "Is there more?" or "Tell me more."

### **STEP TWO: Validate**

Once the Sender says there is "no more", the Receiver will attempt to validate what the Sender has said by asking the Sender if what they have been saying is making logical sense to the Receiver. If it does not, the Receiver will simply share what does make sense, then ask the Sender to say more about the parts that do not yet make sense.

How to Validate: "You make sense to me because..." or "That makes sense, I can see where..."

Ask for clarification: "This part (X) makes sense, but help me understand, can you say more about (Z)...?"

### **STEP THREE: Empathize**

In the final step, Empathy, the Receiver takes a guess as to what they imagine the Sender might be feeling with regard to what they have been saying. If the Sender has already said how they feel, then the Receiver can simply reflect this back once more. If, however, the Receiver can think of an additional way their partner might be feeling, this is where they can add that.

When sending empathy, it is fine to say something such as: "I can imagine you feel like .... (you're the only one working on our relationship)." However, it's important to know that once the word "like" comes into play, what's being expressed is a thought, not a feeling.

The best way we have come to distinguish the difference between a thought and a feeling, is that a feeling can generally be described in one or two words: e.g., happy, excited, safe, cared for, hurt, frustrated, scared. Try to include some "feeling" words if you can, in this step. Doing so will often bring a look of recognition and joy to your partner's face faster than anything else you could say.

How to Empathize:

"I can imagine you might be feeling..."

Check in with them: "Is that how you feel?"

### **Finish**

Now that the Sender has said all they have to say and the Receiver has mirrored, validated and empathized, the whole process reverses. The Receiver now gets their turn to respond with whatever came up for them while the first partner was sending and the Sender shifts into being the new Receiver who does the mirroring, validation and empathy.

**\*\*\* Note:** When partners trade places, the new Sender does not start a new topic, rather she/he responds to what the first Sender said.

## Imago Dialogue: RECEIVER INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. LISTEN:

As your partner speaks, listen without interrupting until he/she pauses or until you ask them to pause.

### 2. MIRROR:

“What I heard you say is . . . .” When your partner pauses, repeat back everything you heard them say, without judging it, critiquing it, analyzing it or significantly adding to it, or taking away from it. And attempt to do so in an “attended” way, meaning, reflect back with a tone that more or less mirrors that of the sender. In other words, if what your partner has just shared is sad, you don’t want to be laughing or even smiling as you mirror back. Paraphrasing is fine but be careful to avoid SENDING while in the Receiver role. The magic of dialogue lies in allowing the Sender to be COMPLETELY in charge of where the conversation goes. Once you ask a question or insert a comment or tone of voice not sent by the Sender, the dialogue is now about your agenda, not theirs. Check it out:

“Did I get that?” or “Did I get you?” Check to make sure you correctly mirrored all that your partner said. If your partner clarifies or corrects something, listen, then mirror again. Continue until your partner says you got it. Ask if there’s more:

“Is there more?” or “Tell me more.” If your partner adds more, mirror, check it out, and then ask, “Is there more?” again. Repeat until your partner says there’s no more.

### 3. SUMMARIZE:

“If I got it all . . . .” or “I think the gist of what you’re saying is . . . .” When done, check for completeness: “Did I get it all?” Mirror any additions your partner makes.

### 4. VALIDATE:

“You (or what you’ve said,) make(s) sense to me because . . . .”

Validate the content of what your partner is saying. Remember, validation is not about agreement. Rather, it is about letting the other know that what they are saying makes sense from their point of view. (“I can see how when I didn’t speak to you after I came home last night, you thought I was mad at you. That makes sense.”) If something your partner says doesn’t make sense, ask them to help you understand by asking them to say more about that. “Help me understand, could you say more about . . . .” Check it out: “Does it feel like I’m getting you?”

### 5. EMPATHIZE

“I can imagine that you might be feeling . . . . (angry, hurt, scared, frustrated, etc.)” To empathize means to imagine what another person is feeling about what they are saying or experiencing. Feelings can be distinguished from thoughts in that feelings can generally be described in one word: hurt, excited, hopeful, etc. If you have trouble empathizing, try to imagine how it might feel if the tables were turned. Or, try to recall a time when someone did something to you that is similar to what your partner is describing now. Although you may well have reacted somewhat differently than your partner, you can still utilize your memory of that experience to help you understand and empathize with your partner’s feelings. Check it out: “Is that how you feel?” Finish Once the Sender has said all they have to say, and you have Mirrored, Validated and Empathized, your partner may ask if you want a turn. If they do not, you may politely ask if you can respond.

## **Imago Dialogue: SENDER INSTRUCTIONS**

The Sender in an Imago Dialogue shares equal responsibility with their partner for the success or failure of any dialogue.

Remaining calm and conscious is usually easy when the topic is positive, as in the Appreciation Dialogue.

However, when the topic has some energy around it, we often slip into “reactive sending”, a sure invitation to Dialogue-Failure! Following these steps when the topic is a little more touchy will help insure a positive outcome for yourself, your partner and your relationship!

### **1. Make an appointment!**

In a Conscious Marriage/Relationship, all issues are discussed “by appointment only”! Go to your partner and ask if this is an OK time to talk. If they say “no”, respect their answer and ask them to let you know, sometime in the next 24 hours, when they’d be willing to dialogue. If it’s important to you, establish who will initiate this. If your partner is someone who finds such talks difficult, be willing to take the lead.

### **2. Statement of Intentionality**

Begin with an introductory statement that helps your partner feel safe about “what” and “how” you are going to send. “I want you to know that I am sharing this with you because I care about our relationship.” Or, “I want this to be a win win discussion.”

### **3. Pause**

Practice pausing periodically so your partner can mirror back what you’ve said. If your partner does not mirror, ask them to do so in a non-demanding manner.

### **4. Stay focused**

Attempt to avoid rambling off down side roads – stick to your topic and make it only one topic per dialogue!

### **5. Use “I” statements**

“I” statements are those that begin with the word “I” and describe how you feel and /or need or desire. References to others are made without judgement and/or attribution of motive. “When you interrupt me, I feel disrespected and dismissed.” Or, “When you don’t call, I start to get scared and angry . . .” “I” statements reduce the blaming caused by “you” statements. (“You don’t care about my feelings . . .” “You make me . . .”) Note: “I think that you . . .”, does not qualify as an “I” statement.

## 6. Maintain non-threatening, non-accusatory tone of voice and body language

If your voice is angry, your partner will have no choice but to put up their defenses and they will have a difficult time mirroring. If you cannot remove the anger, it is not a good time to ask for a dialogue. Wait until you are more calm.

## 7. Select your words carefully

It is inflammatory to blame, label, mind-read or use absolutes (e.g., "you always" and "you never"). It is quite acceptable to say: "I feel unloved when you don't talk to me". It is NOT acceptable to say: "You never talk to me because you are selfish and do not love me."8. Actively reinforce positive behaviors! If you like the way your partner mirrors what you have said, SAY SO! "Thank you for hearing me. It really helped."

## 9. To end . . .

When done, thank your partner for listening and ask if they would like a chance to reply. If they say "yes", move into the role of the Receiver.

## HOMework

Try this out with a partner or friend who is willing to sit with you and learn this beautiful empowered way to improve your communication

## In Review, what you've learned today is:

1. What Is Imago Dialogue?
2. The Art of Seeing Things From Another's Point of View
3. Using Imago Dialogue In Communication

Let's end today's lesson with a quote:

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*Without communication there is no relationship. Without respect there is no love. Without trust there is no reason to continue ~*

Anonymous

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Now, head on over to the "[\*\*Arise In Your Queen Facebook Page\*\*](#)" and share **one key reflection** that you gained from the lesson today.

Great job and I'll see you in the final lesson "**The Couple Bubble**"