



## **Bridgit Dengel Gaspard, LCSW**

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### **WORK IT OUT:**

#### **Build Your Communication Muscles With Your Partner In This 3-Workout Bootcamp With Bridgit**

Difficult conversations are not for sissies! They're a part of life and are usually most intense with the people closest to us – spouses, partners, parents, bosses, colleagues, etc. The great news is you are not doomed to painfully keep going around the same topics over and over again with no resolution and lots of hurt feelings. Learn 3 simple steps to better communication that help you listen and be heard. This technique has the added benefit of being useful in the workplace as well as with your children and other family members. This popular 3-Workout Series is appropriate for all levels – and I will move you up to advanced level very quickly. **THIS IS NOT COUPLES THERAPY** (although couples LOVE it!)

How does this convenient, short 3-Session Bootcamp work?

- You commit to meeting three times for just under an hour within a 1-2 month period, by paying for all three sessions in advance. And that's it. When you finish the 3<sup>rd</sup> session you are empowered to navigate the tough terrains communications take you to!
1. In the first communications workout you learn the 3 simple steps (which I outline below.)  
**HOMEWORK:** You will be asked to practice before meeting for the second workout.
  2. The second communications workout is where your questions are answered, the communications technique is clarified and there is a discussion about the progress (or lack of progress) putting into practice your 3 communication steps. As in all good fitness programs, you do reps of the skills as you practice together. I coach you how to correctly use them. **HOMEWORK:** You will be asked to practice before meeting for the third workout.

3. The third, and final communications workout solidifies your healthy communication regimen. You are now armed to practice great communication (and no, that does not mean you agree with each other all the time!) What you have gained is the dexterity, flexibility, and strength to respectfully handle differing points of view within your relationship.

The following is a brief overview of what you will learn, in full, in the first session. This technique is based on Harville Hendrix's Imago Dialogue mirroring technique outlined in Getting The Love You Want (which you should definitely get – a copy for each partner in the couple!)

#### Step 1: Mirroring the Content of the Conversation

- Tell your partner the message you would like them to hear. The message should start with "I" and describe your emotions/feelings. (Example: "I prefer when...")
- Your partner then mirrors your message. (Example: "If I'm understanding correctly, your preference is... Is that right?")
- Say yes if your partner did get it right. If you feel your partner didn't understand your message, clarify and explain again NONJUDGMENTALLY and have them mirror the content of the message until it's received the way it was sent. You do this whether or not you are in agreement with your partner.

When your message has been heard accurately, you can then move on to the next step.

#### Step 2: Validating the Emotions behind the Content of the Conversation

The point is to understand your partner's point of view (whether or not you agree.)

- "Given what you just said, I imagine you must feel... Is that right?"
- Say yes if your partner did get it. If you feel your partner didn't understand your message, or didn't fully get it, clarify and explain again NONJUDGMENTALLY and have them mirror until the message is received the way it was sent.

#### Step 3: Empathizing With the Point of View

- "Given what you said, that you feel X, Y & Z, I imagine that you feel... Is that right?"
- Say yes if your partner did get it. If you feel your partner didn't understand your message, or didn't fully get it, clarify and explain again NONJUDGMENTALLY and have them mirror until the message is received the way it was sent.

It's easier to understand the three steps outlined above when I can show you exactly what this looks like. (It would be hard to explain basketball or soccer, no matter how fun the game may be.) That's why you make a 3-session appointment with me – so I can jump-start your new lifestyle!

Reminder: THIS IS NOT COUPLES THERAPY – THIS IS A COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
3-WORKOUT BOOTCAMP

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