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## **THE FOUR HONORINGS OF COMMUNICATION**

When you need to communicate something difficult, scary, uncomfortable, dangerous, potentially embarrassing, or anything else that may be experienced as threatening or humiliating to someone you have a vested relationship with (spouse, colleague, friend,...boss!), you are often caught between your integrity and honesty, and your fear of the potential damages. Too often, you just don't know how you can do it without the harm, so you say...nothing. And, the other person stays uninformed to his/her detriment, to your detriment, to the relationship's, family's, business', or organization's detriment; and/or you stay silent filled with growing resentment, anger, and a sense of impotence. To protect the relationship, you stay quiet; yet by staying silent you allow the relationship to accept a kind of time-release poison that compromises it.

The choice becomes to stay silent and accept the certain pain of unresolved issues, or to speak and risk explosion. The choice to speak...to communicate becomes more viable with improved communication skills. The Four Honorings of Communication offer guidance.

When you need to communicate something risky or uncomfortable, first communicate the Four Honorings. In order, honor:

- 1) the **FEELINGS** of the person to whom you are speaking;
- 2) the **RELATIONSHIP** between you and the person;
- 3) your own **INTEGRITY**- your need to care for yourself;
- 4) the **HIGHER PURPOSE** the two of you both honor and serve.

then speak the truth the best you can.

For example:

"I need to tell you something that is very difficult for me to say. I realize that it may feel hurtful or critical or make you feel uncomfortable, and I really don't want that to happen but I need to say it. I also know that it may harm our relationship...a relationship that I enjoy and value but again I need to say it, because I don't know how to not say it and be honest with myself; or not say it and be true to the reason we're here together in the first place. I need to speak out for us both to do right by ourselves and our mission. Is it ok if I tell you?"

At this point, except for the most insecure and defended individuals (and unfortunately, there will be such individuals), while nervous and apprehensive, most people will take your communication fairly receptively. Good Luck! Good Communication! Good Relationships!