

**The Feedback Wheel**  
Based on Terry Real's Work

**Tool Purpose:** Disagreements, conflict mitigation, road map for communication.

**Consider the Following**

We have a tendency in our culture to over-talk. We believe that more detail will make a more “win-able” argument. However, most people, on average, when faced with a relationship conflict can listen for about 5-6 sentences, maximum. When we feel unheard, we have a tendency to get louder, repeat ourselves, or pull in other details to re-engage the listener.

**Before Beginning - Remember**

- Get centered in your “Functional Adult” – meaning, get centered in the adult part of you. The part that is flexible, understanding, non-reactionary, non-defensive, and considerate.
- Tone trumps content. Be very aware of how loud/ fast you are speaking.
- If you are the speaker, give two – three sentences max. You will have to think before you speak. You will need to be succinct & efficient.
- Stay on your side of the relationship fence. Own what you can. Listen with an open heart. Always say, “I” and not “you.”
- Remember love. This is the person you love you are speaking to.

**Set Up: Two Roles**

**1. The Listener Role**

- You are like a customer service agent. If someone were to come and say to you, “My microwave is broken.” You wouldn't say, “Well my toaster is broken.”
- Put yourself aside, and put your objective reality aside. Really try and understand your partner's experience – just for a moment.
- Turn points of contention into points of curiosity. Let go of being right.

**2. The Speaker Role**

- To speak succinctly and thoughtfully.

**Steps for the Speaker**

**1. “Is now a good time to talk?”**

- Always ask permission to speak before going through the Feedback Wheel.

**2. “This is what I experienced.”**

- This is where you give the DNA of the issue at hand. These are the facts, as you remember them. Do not go into your feelings or your thoughts about “why” you are upset, or “why” you are right. This is the section for context and facts.

**3. “What I made up about it is.”**

- This is where you explain your thoughts about why the conflict happened. This allows your partner to understand your thought process.
- It is crucial that you understand that you made this up in your mind. Even though it is true for you, it may not be true for your partner.

**4. “How I feel about it is”**

- Do not say, “I feel like.” Once you say the word “like” you cross over into a thought. You want to say a feeling. For example, “I felt lonely.” “I felt overwhelmed.”

**5. “What I would like is”**

- This is the section that you need to think about what you want. Is your partner capable of your request? Is it feasible and reasonable? Be clear with your request.

### **Steps for the Listener**

Lead with agreement. The more accountable you can be, the more you will decrease escalations. Find *something* you can own. Your job is to listen & acknowledge.

**1. “What I hear you say is”**

- This validates to the speaker that you listened.

**2. Acknowledge whatever you can**

- Acknowledge something in the speaker’s description that you can own or understand.

**3. Give as much as you can**

- In the speaker’s request, what can you give? What can you agree to?