

THE SEVEN LEVELS OF INTIMACY – MATTHEW KELLY – 2pg summary

Intimacy is the mutual self-revelation that allows us to know and be known. Intimacy is the mutual sharing of the journey to fulfill our life purpose – to become the-best-version-of-ourselves.

1. CLICHES – the first level of intimacy is impersonal

- The right amount of small talk to make people feel comfortable
- Useful for day-to-day transactions and for making initial connections with people

2. FACTS – saying something about yourself

- Lower level impersonal facts, e.g., current events, the weather, sports
- Higher level impersonal facts, a discussion of the life of Abraham Lincoln or what causes a tsunami
- Personal facts, i.e., facts about you (This is the bridge into opinions)

3. OPINIONS – revealing more about yourself and offering the gift of acceptance to others

- Surfacing techniques (to defuse the discomfort of controversy and that prevent intimacy)
- Knowing how, when, and why to agree and disagree (gracefully) – how to agree and disagree in ways that bring life to our relationships, rather than destroying enthusiasm and creating resentments
- Finding common ground; seeing the other's point of view – finding genuine agreement
- Acceptance is the key; acceptance of those with differing opinions – being w/people whose opinions differ; allowing others to be themselves rather than pushing them to be someone else

4. HOPES & DREAMS – setting aside instant gratification iot build a future together

- Our dreams very often reveal our hopes, fears, fantasies, and deepest desires.
- Knowing what brings passion/energy/enthusiasm to the lives of those we love - what drives them.
- Willingness to delay gratification iot achieve a joint dream

5. FEELINGS – emotional reactions – being vulnerable enough to tell how you really feel

- Exploring how we really feel (about people, places, things, events)
- Learning to express in healthy ways for ourselves and w/o being hurtful to another
- Feelings often reveal our brokenness, our humanity, our need to be held, listened to, and loved
- Allowing those we love to express their feelings; to be truly heard; listening
- U/sg *why* people have the feelings they do and why they react the way they do

6. FAULTS, FEARS, AND FAILURES – exposing our woundedness

- Tending to –healing– the wounds of our past. Healing our wounds and making new choices
- Sharing one's history (one's story)
- Sharing that I have faults: that I need help, I am afraid, and I have messed up
- Knowing it's not about trying to fix each other, but walking bravely with each other
- Forgiveness of self and others
- Moving to making choices for the future – striving to be TBVO-oneself (rather than being victim to one's past)

7. LEGITIMATE NEEDS – dynamic collaboration (to create a need-fulfilling lifestyle)

- To know and be known – seeing, feeling, thinking, experiencing through your partner's perspective
- With partner, creating a lifestyle focused on fulfillment of each other's legitimate needs
- Knowing and responding in a dynamic way to each other's needs
- Physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual needs – helping your partner become TBVO-him/herself
- *Thriving* through satisfaction of our legitimate needs

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- Our essential purpose – the purpose of our life -- is to become The-Best-Version-Of (TBVO)-ourselves.
- Intimacy is sharing the journey to become TBVO-ourselves with another person.
- Intimacy is a need. You can survive without it. But you cannot thrive and become The-Best-Version-Of-yourself without intimacy. There is a restlessness, w/in each of us, that wants to be calmed, tamed. This restlessness is our heart's yearning for intimacy.
- We yearn to know and be known – we yearn for intimacy – the process of mutual self-revelation.
- **Intimacy requires that we allow another person to discover...** what moves us, what inspires us, what drives us, what eats at us, what we are running toward, what we are running from, what silent self-destructive enemies lie w/in us, and what wild and wonderful dreams we hold in our hearts.
- In our efforts to feel complete, worthy, fulfilled, and contented, we often chase pleasure, possessions, and status. But these do not fulfill us. You simply never can get enough of what you don't really need. Contentment is found only by creating a lifestyle that tends to our legitimate needs – physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Intimacy is one of our real and legitimate **needs**.
- The mutual fulfilling of legitimate needs is the pinnacle of relationships. Focus on this is what it means to be soul mates.
- A relationship is about helping someone else become TBVO-him/herself, and receiving the support that you need to become TBVO-yourself.
- To love a person means to do everything within your power to help that person become TBVO-himself and never to do anything that would hinder him from achieving this great essential purpose.
- A good relationship is one where we are challenged and encouraged to become TBVO-ourselves, while we encourage and challenge others to become all they are capable of being. Troubled relationships are those that lead us away from our essential purpose, those that encourage us to be lesser-versions-of-ourselves.
- **The ultimate dysfunction in a relationship occurs when the individuals within that relationship seek personal fulfillment at the expense of the other(s).**
- The very idea of an authentic relationship presupposes that you would never take pleasure or selfish fulfillment at the other person's expense. But our culture celebrates and applauds ruthless selfishness.
- For a relationship to develop, grow, blossom, and thrive for any significant period of time, we must shift our focus from the pursuit of illegitimate want to the pursuit of legitimate needs. Very few people focus their lives on their legitimate needs. We then bring this diseased mind-set to our relationships, which we approach as if getting what we want is the goal. So then begin the mind games and the tug-of-war between our wants and the wants of our significant other. Once these games begin, it is very difficult to stop. We use emotional manipulation, emotional blackmail, and any number of other psychological devices to get our way. We set out to win, and we have set the game up so that winning means getting *our* way. The individual egos never have a chance to form a common collective ego, and so any attempt at intimacy is guaranteed to fail.
- BUT relationships are not about getting what you want. They are about helping each other to become TBVO-ourselves.
- Love is the desire to see the person we love be and become all s/he is capable of being and becoming.
- The journey through the seven levels of intimacy is a journey from the shallow to the deep, from irrelevant to relevant, from illegitimate desires to legitimate needs, from judgment to acceptance, from fear to courage, from false self to **true self**, from isolation to unity, and from loneliness to profound companionship.

Guidelines for this model:

- Relationships are rarely confined to any single level...
- The seven levels are not a task to be completed and graduated from...
- Not all relationships deserve to experience all seven levels...but our primary relationship should be a place where we can experience the depths of intimacy. There should be no limits to what we are willing to explore here, unless of course it will hurt the other person in a way that will not help him/her to become the-best-version-of-him/herself.
- You cannot rush intimacy.
- The best way to learn something is to teach it – so discuss intimacy and its seven levels with those you know.