

We all can experience feelings of anger which most often are attributed to unmet emotional need. Because love and pain exist on the same continuum, it stands to reason that the greater the experience of love for another person, the greater the capacity to experience pain in response to what we believe should be happening but is not happening in the relationship. Trust is even more important than love to be able to build a deeply bonded interdependent relationship. Trust has to do with the idea of, "Can I rely on you to be emotionally present and also be able to listen to me with the intention of understanding?" Instead of this, what typically happens is that we can be able to listen to a person and remain curious as long as we can identify with the other person's perception of the problem. When communication breaks down in couples, this will occur because one individual is responding to the other from the vantage point of how the listener sees the problem rather than remembering in real time that our partner who is sharing their view of the challenge is their own unique individual with their own separate ideas, feelings, and beliefs.

When we can truly listen to someone else with the intention of wanting to understand how the other person is feeling and experiencing something, that is when someone experiences "feeling felt." One myth associated with listening and participating in a discussion in this way where one remains truly curious throughout the conversation is the mistaken notion that by participating in a discussion, asking open ended questions, and remaining curious, that it then pressures or obligates us to change our mind about how we see it. Another myth is that listening and being engaged in a way that reinforces care in considering our partner's view is that it obligates the listener to do what their partner is requesting of them. This is not the case and it seems that these myths along with others paint a picture of what is going wrong in our society in terms of how we relate to each other.