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“You made me feel”...

Many times during our work together, I will encourage you to change your language to your partner while you are sending your truth to them. One of the biggest challenges I find is we often use the phrase, “you made me feel.... (sad, mad, upset, etc).”

I will ask you to change your language to, “**I felt** (blank)”, or “When you did (blank), **I felt**...”, or even “I responded/reacted by feeling (blank)”

I would like you and your partner to sit together and consider all of the differences between these two ways of relating. “You made me feel”, vs “I felt/ responded/reacted by feeling”:

- What are all the fundamental differences between these two ways of expressing our feelings?
- What different messages are we sending using one vs the other?
- Where does the power lie in one vs the other?
- How might it feel different to be on the receiving end of one vs the other?
- What is our expectation of repair using one phrase vs the other?
- Is there one that sounds more childlike than the other, and if so, why?

Once you begin to get a clear picture, focus on being mindful of using the healthier phrase in your daily life, not just with your partner. Notice what feels different, if anything. Re-visit what you have noticed with your partner so that it can become more second nature to you both. Remember, if your partner is sharing with you and they say something in a way that your limbic system gets activated, then gently invite them to say it a different way. For example, “I seem to get activated when you tell me “I made you feel angry, would you be willing to say, “I felt angry? That would be very helpful to me.”

Be cautious not to fall into the pattern of finding fault with your partner’s sending, and using the “suggestions” as a weapon to catch your partner, rather than a way to get into connection.