

## **Unit 2: Reflection Paper Assignment**

**By Melisa Fahey**

Conversations, no matter whom they are with, can determine the way any situation will end. Throughout my lifetime I have learned how conversations can destroy relationships by not consciously being thoughtful about how communication goes. When I was a child, I never saw my parents fight verbally or otherwise. What I did see from my parents was a lack of touch and loving communication. I don't believe I ever realized this was the case until I entered into a relationship with someone and got married myself. The difference is that I am an extremely emotional human being. I always used my verbal communication to express when someone hurt my feelings or said something hurtful. I never realized it was them trying to give me constructive communication. Well, some of the time. I would just get angry and cry because my feelings had been hurt. I guess this is when I started to learn verbal and nonverbal communication.

When I was married, we argued a lot and my ex-husband was so good at using belittling communication or saying hurtful things because he wasn't good at communicating either, but the good that came out of this was that I learned to be careful what words I would say out of anger. I learned that it may be easy to say hurtful words and raise a voice to try to win a conversation, but they hurt! I didn't like being hurt or hurting others, so I started using non-verbal communication to communicate. I would shut up and not say anything, but I guess the expressions on my face would then tell a different tale. I then had to learn that angry expressions would come across my face. So now I had to worry about expressions I was making, not realizing that those could hurt.

In relationships with friends and significant others always seemed so difficult because I would make such a great effort to be careful not to scrunch my nose or the forehead skin or say hurtful things in a verbal conversation. Please do not think I am innocent of still making mistakes with my verbal and nonverbal communication. It is a learning process. Emotional Individuals use all forms of communication to express themselves I have realized.

While taking my prerequisites for college I learned in my psych class that looking someone in the eye, making your body face the body of the person I was speaking to, leaning forward in the conversation, keeping your arms uncrossed (open posture), and relaxing were all ways of making a person feel listened to and comfortable enough to have difficult conversations with. I was never taught that there was an acronym for it (SOLER). I always want for the person I'm in a conversation with to feel as though they are heard, and this form of communication also allows me to really hear what is being said and not to get distracted.

As a Fifty-one-year-old individual, I have spent my entire life learning how important verbal, nonverbal, therapeutic and nontherapeutic, as well as nonverbal expressions can completely take a conversation that seems like it would be a simple one and change it into something that can destroy or hurt a relationship. It is so important to make sure other people are heard and cared for! Sometimes it is not always easy to accomplish this in our day-to-day interactions with people and even animals. Even our fur babies feel when something is off with us due to how we interact with them. It is my hope that the people around me can learn to find more constructive, peaceful ways to communicate with others.