



Moving Through Enabling Ambi Daniel

We left off with understanding enabling and understanding what it is, what it means for our loved ones, and the value and purpose it has for us as loved ones. In this continuation, we'll look at a process for assessing our choices. I gave our group a specific 5 step format to examine for homework and we'll look at it here and how it may play out!

1. Describe the situation and the behavior or enabling choice.
2. Identify what *your* personal benefit is in this choice.
3. Identify what you could do differently "next time" or wish you would do.
4. Identify a list of ways you can meet the need of your personal benefit.
5. Identify a plan or boundary if this event were to happen again. (We'll tackle this with some specific tools, Tuesday, 6/9/2020.)

With our group we looked at a few different real-life scenarios following these steps. One of the hardest realizations was that steps 4 and 5 can be really difficult, because a) meeting the need isn't always a clear cut cause and effect, and b) when we choose to change our plan or response, our need may not be met, and we may have to deal with the fallout of the other person's reaction. These are 2 very important components of why we continue actions that may enable their behavior. We are unintentionally supporting their negative behavior by meeting our needs.

Let's look at a couple of common scenarios:

Many families choose to pay rent for their loved ones who are struggling. They may or may not be in treatment and they may not have a job. In this scenario, every family I have ever worked with shared that they do this because they want to know their loved one has a safe place to live with a roof over their head. The personal benefit is their peace of mind. Many families also share that the idea that their loved one may go to a shelter is terrifying or that they feel like they are failures as parents if they end up in a shelter. There may be fallout of judgement, shame, and stigma if others learn a loved one is in a shelter. Avoiding the pain of this is a very powerful benefit.

When families bring this up, it's easy to recognize that they wish they could not pay rent! It might be a financial burden, it might be that they feel like their loved one won't learn to change, or even that they just feel the resentments from expecting things will be different "this time." Many say they wish they could avoid the argument that comes with the discussion as well.

Here comes the hard part....How do you meet the personal needs of peace of mind, avoiding conflicts, avoiding stigma, shame, judgements, and pain? The reality is, sometimes we cannot avoid it and it becomes about how one will survive it and move through it *when* it happens.



"This journey is often about survival in the lion's den."

With this situation, I'll share some statements of actions to meet the needs. Sometimes it's a one and done and they never enable again. Others, it's a work in progress through the survival.

1. I will do everything in my power to set my loved one up for success, sharing resources, and connecting them to people who can facilitate using various services in the community.
2. I will pay rent or x months and offer to help with a budget. At that point, I know I've done what I can to give them time to prepare and it's no longer on me if he or she doesn't step up.
3. I will go visit a shelter to see what it's like and see if my fears mirror what the shelter is really like.
4. I will work with a counselor or therapist to process my feelings of shame and guilt.
5. I will take time to reinforce the positive things I've done and the reasons why I am a good parent and how I show that I love my child.
6. I will surround myself with people who share this lived experience so I can get feedback and remember I'm not alone.
7. I will stand up for myself when there are judgements and share the evidence that the judgement is not the whole picture.
8. I will allow myself time to cry and be upset, and work with my support team to move forward.
9. I will set clear boundaries, share them, and follow through.
10. I will deal with my discomfort by having conversations, using my support, going to alanon, journaling, and practice kindness and understanding for them and for me.
11. I will forgive myself if I choose to do this again, I have a very important need that is a priority.

Let's look at one more situation that is really common for most families:

Action/enabling behavior: making excuses for a loved one

Our benefit: it makes us feel better, it justifies why it happens, it might sell it to someone that it's not as bad as it looks, it relieves us of shame, I understand it if I pick it apart.

What we want to do differently: share the truth and be comfortable with it

How we will meet our needs/benefits: work on ourselves through different methods

Plan: Detach with love, educate self on shame and addiction, recognize we are not alone, set up rules of engagement, practice mindfulness, pick my battles, learn more about letting go of resentments, practice verbalizing the truth.



“Through this journey, we realize the foundation of our home, is built on many pieces.”

This is not an easy process. I can tell you, when we use a process like this, many families are able to change their action, or if they make the same choice, they have the opportunity to own why and what benefit they are receiving. It opens the opportunity for self-exploration, relief of guilt, and healing.

On Tuesday 6/9/2020 we will work on a process of boundary setting before moving into looking into the parallel process of addiction that loved ones face that mirrors what many people face, in their journey.





Love and Support

Ambi Daniel

We've previously talked about defining support, recently we worked on understanding love languages. What I need to feel loved may be different than what other people in my life might need to feel loved. There is a book, [The 5 Love Languages](#), written by Gary Chapman, and we explored his work and took the personal quiz on the website to better understand our needs and that of our loved ones.

Chapman identifies 5 specific love languages:

- Quality Time
- Acts of Service
- Words of Affirmation
- Physical Touch
- Gifts

When we look at these things at face value, it's easy to see, for the most part, that we all appreciate all of these things when they are given to us in acts of love. At the same time, there is one that we connect to most and it's our primary way to connect with another.

Take a few minutes and take the quiz, found here:

<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/singles-quiz/>

Your results will tell you your order of your love languages! I can tell you that quality time is my primary love language, and it's easy to see that my strongest relationships are the ones that I'm able to enjoy time spent with them. For me it's a shared activity that we can experience together that is most powerful in my relationships. My lowest totem language is gifts. Of course, I appreciate when someone gives a gift, that said, it's not the truest way to my heart connection. For someone I love, their primary language is words of affirmation, it's important that they hear what I notice or recognize qualities of things they've done. Another person I love, receives love best in acts of service, doing something for them really makes them feel loved.

So, let's play this tape out! If someone is trying to show me that they love me by buying me gifts regularly, but they are hanging out on their phone when we are at dinner, not only do I not feel the strong heart connection, they may not get the response they are hoping for. If I never share what I notice about my loved one's progress or what I think of them as a person, they may not feel loved. On the other hand, if I wash my other loved one's car or make them dinner....Phew...hearts galore!



“Life is often made from the experiences of love with those that share it with us.”

“Wait....hold up...what does this have to do with Recovery?”

And this, this is the beautiful part. Just like we work on providing support in the way a person will accept it, when we can speak in their love language, we open great doors to connection. Johan Hari shared, “The opposite of addiction is connection.” When we feel loved, it’s easier to move forward with support through the many challenges this life will bring. It’s easier to manage patience, to see the positive intent, to capture moments of happiness, and so much more. This rings just as true with Recovery. When our loved ones feel connection, we are able to provide a really amazing piece of Recovery Capital that is so powerful, it helps them continue forward on their Recovery journey.

I encourage you to share the experience of your love languages quiz results with loved ones and encourage them to share theirs as well. When we checked in with how this impacted our week with our loved ones, we found some interesting results! Some group members identified that practicing speaking in their loved one’s primary language, led to easier discussion, less stress, more openness, and more smiling. When receiving their primary love language, they were able to better respond to various situations and felt better about how things were going during the week. Rational emotive behavioral therapy tells us that when a situation happens, we have thoughts; conscious and unconscious. Those thoughts lead to how we feel. How we feel leads to how we react. When we change those thoughts, and feel love, think of what the changes in our actions and reactions might be! How much easier might it be to change an enabling action?

If you take the quiz, we’d love for you to share your results and how it impacted your relationships! On the 5 Love Languages website you’ll also find quizzes that help assess your interactions with apologies and anger! There is also a link to the wonderful book that supports your work ahead in this!

