

Table Talk: Improving Communication at the Game Table

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Reactive Conflict Strategies:

- These are short-term, and generally do not allow for effective conflict resolution.
- Fight, Flight, Freeze
- Identify your own warning signs that these are happening.
- Practice your communication skills.

Setting the Stage for Effective Communication (HALT):

- Hungry (no brain energy)
- Angry (irritated, frustrated, furious)
- Lonely (sad, depressed, down)
- Tired (physically, emotionally)

Effective Communication Strategy (DEAR MAN)*:

- Describe
 - o Just the facts. Avoid adjectives.
- Express
 - o Your feelings and opinions. No mind readers here.
- Assert
 - o What you want/ don't want. Be as clear and behavioral as possible.
- Reinforce/Reward
 - o Why should they? Make them an offer they can't refuse
- Mindful
 - o Stay on topic. Be a broken record.
- Appear Confident
 - o Use a confident tone. Be clear and respectful.
- Negotiate
 - o Offer alternative solutions. Be open to other's ideas

The Kitchen Sink

- We're in the middle of a pandemic. Cut yourself some slack! Take care of your needs.
- Longstanding Issues: If these keep coming up in your arguments about games, it might be time to address them.
- Perpetual Problems: Everyone has them! Can you live with them?
- PRACTICE. Practice. Practice.
 - o Try with low-stakes conflict
 - o Take breaks
 - o Eat snacks
 - o Be respectful

*Adapted from Marsha Linehan's DBT.

