Six Choices in Building Relationships

When people interact to try to build a relationship, the essence of these choices is staying positive, focusing on yourself, and what you can do to improve things. When the other person is addressed, it is to negotiate, invite more intimacy, or seek a way for both to improve the relationship.

CHOICE	EXAMPLE
Focusing on the positive:	"I really enjoy being with you for a serious conservation without frivolous distractions into silliness."
	"I think you are a very nice person--do you think you're too nice?"
Focusing on myself and us:	"I've been getting mad a lot lately and I'm afraid that it is hurting our relationship."
	"I'm having more trouble lately being happy when I'm with you. I'm wondering if we can work things out differently?"
	"I'm having trouble trusting you because I have never really learned how to trust and still protect myself at the same time."
Focusing on solutions:	"I have been really looking forward to walking home to find a clean kitchen. Is there a way we can work it out so that I can get what I want?"
	"What can I do to help having dinner as soon as I get home?"
Reminding in a positive way:	"Will you please take out the trash now, since we agreed you'd do it?"
	"Please go clean your room so we will all feel good about the house when your company comes over."
Promising:	"I realize that drinking is important to you, but I do not like the smell of alcohol on you, nor the way you act when you drink. I have decided that I will not stay in a relationship with you if you continue to choose drinking over the relationship."
	"I am hoping you will be home when I get there because I am ready to spend some quality time with you."
Negotiating:	"While we haven't spent much time together all day, I believe that if we can spend some close time together now, I will be much more comfortable to go with you."
	"I realize I have not been feeling close to you after what happened earlier but I think if we can talk it out, that we will be able to get back closer again."