

## How to Use the Dr Burns' Relationship Cost-Benefit Analysis

Think of someone you are having difficulties getting along with: it might be your spouse, a family member, your boss or a friend. Would you like to get along better with that person? If the answer is yes, then think of a specific upsetting interaction you had with him or her. Visualize the interaction in your mind's eye. What was the other person saying to you? Maybe he or she was complaining and ignoring your good advice. Maybe he or she was being critical, stubborn or argumentative.

Now ask yourself who was primarily to blame for the conflict. Who was being the most unreasonable? Who was the most responsible for the problem? Most of us blame the other person. In your heart of hearts, you probably believe that it's mainly the other person's fault. After all, they **were** being quite difficult, weren't they: And they could have been a whole lot more reasonable! Right?

The first step in solving any personal relationship problem is to list the advantages and disadvantages of blaming the other person. Ask yourself, 'how it will help me to blame them. And how will it hurt me? What are the benefits of this mind-set? And what are the costs?'

There are many advantages to blaming someone: you'll feel innocent; you'll feel righteous; you'll feel superior; you'll feel convinced that you are "right"; you won't have to change; you can harbor resentment; you won't have to feel guilty; you can feel sorry for yourself; you can complain about that person to friends, etc. List all these advantages in the left-hand column of the Relationship Cost-Benefit Analysis.

Now ask yourself if there are any disadvantages of blaming the other person. How will this mind-set hurt me? Is there a down-side to this attitude? List the disadvantages in the right-hand column.

Finally, balance the advantages against the disadvantages on a 100 point scale and put your estimates in the two rectangles at the bottom. Are the advantages or disadvantages greater? If the advantages of blaming the other person outweigh the disadvantages you might put 70-30 or 60-40 in the two columns at the bottom. If the disadvantages outweigh the advantages you might put 45-55 or 35-65 in the two circles.

## Dr. Burns' Relationship Cost-Benefit Analysis

Advantages of Blaming the Other Person	Disadvantages of Blaming the Other Person

**BOTH COLUMNS TOGETHER MUST ADD UP TO 100% SUCH AS:**

**50% + 50% = 100%**

**OR 70% + 30% = 100%**

**OR 20% + 80% = 100%**

DISADVANTAGES TOTAL WEIGHT

ADVANTAGES TOTAL WEIGHT