

## Exercise 3.2

Try this exercise to practice communicating in whole messages:

1. Select a friend or family member whom you trust.
2. Explain the concept of whole messages.
3. Arrange a time to practice.
4. Select something you want to talk about, something that was important enough to affect you emotionally. It can be something in the past or something going on right now, something involving others, or something directly related to the person you are practicing with.
5. Talk about your chosen subject using the four components of a whole message: what happened, what you observed, what you thought, how you felt, and what you need in the situation.
6. When you finish, have your partner repeat back in his or her own words each part of the message.
7. Correct anything that he or she didn't get quite right.
8. Reverse the whole process, and let your partner describe an experience using whole messages.

Then make an agreement with your friend or family member that every significant communication between you will involve whole messages. Commit yourself to practicing whole messages for two weeks. Always be sure to give each other feedback about what was heard and what was left out of the message. At the end of two weeks, evaluate your experience.