



Going South or Going North?

Why is it so much easier to snap and climb in our survival suit of defensiveness than it is to be thoughtful and relationally mature?

This very morning Brett and I had a scratchy breakfast simply because I was trying to say something important to him that I was feeling anxious about and it felt like he wasn't really listening (*for goodness sake, we teach this listening stuff!!*). When I pressed in, he reverted back to his strategy of poking fun at it (*read me!!*). Well that just invited my frustration and anxiety to escalate (*I had some descriptive names for him right then – and trust me they weren't pretty names!*).

So even more upset, I am now focussed on judging him, which of course he reacts to by letting a little sharp judgmental edge creep into what he said next (***arghhhh...!!!***).

So here we are speeding south down the pathway of disconnection with our bodies in uproar - how did this happen?!

The first thing to say is that the 'going South' is linked to the negativity bias in our brains - the evolutionary wiring that weights the negative as more important to pay attention to because of the life or death consequences that any pain awakens in the brain. We call this the downward pull!

The going North metaphor is a picture of choosing to head towards relational maturity and consciousness and we call this the upward trend. Now the interesting thing about these two directions is the turning point which must be navigated in a whole body-brain-essence way by slowing down and noticing what is happening in your **own** body first.

The second thing to say is that we can genuinely notice what is happening in our own body, soothe it and be open to moving towards the other – it's a muscle we can grow.

We like to say your relationship is a laboratory in which you run your experiments around growing up. Maybe we should call it a gym where we challenge our muscles to grow into relational maturity?

Trouble is, I do so hate gyms...