Chapter Seven – Working with Emotion to Shape the Blamer Softening Change Event (Steps 5-7)

In Chapter 7 I explore the blamer softening change event (BLS). This second round of Steps 5–7 is focused on the more pursuing partner softening and taking a new position in the relationship. I present recent research that shows that BLS is found to be crucial to success in shaping secure bonds between partners. After defining the change event of BLS, I guide the reader on an exploration of the key ingredients of change in BLS from the perspectives of what is seen, what is done, and how the steps are done.

What a therapist sees and hears in Steps 5, 6 & 7 Blamer Softening (BLS)

I provide descriptions and validations for the following elements that a therapist is likely to see:
- An engaged withdrawer
- A Pursuer sometimes withdrawing.
- Vulnerable emotions “online”.
- Emerging similarities between withdrawers’ and pursuers’ needs and longings: After the second Stage 2 change event, (withdrawers wanting acceptance and space, and pursuers wanting connection and closeness) emerge as the same basic need to know the other is fully there for them.

What therapist and clients do in Steps 5, 6, & 7 BLS

I share a snapshot of Kyle and Tara’s experience of Tara’s blamer softening change event. According to the expanded themes of the original blamer softening mini-theory (Bradley & Furrow, 2004, 2007, & 2010), I also delineate ten basic themes of what therapist and clients do in Steps 5, 6, and & 7 BLS with Sophie’s softening in her relationship with the re-engaged Ella. Bradley and Furrow have provided a readily accessible and practical map of the softening change event for therapists newly stepping into EFT. The EFT interventions used for each theme are noted.

How a therapist does Steps 5, 6 and 7 BLS

I discuss how a therapist uses the EFT interventions to facilitate BLS in a similar manner to Steps 5, 6, and & WRE.

I conclude Part 3 – The role of emotion in creating lasting change: Reshaping attachment bonds in Stage 2 of EFT – with references to studies showing that the BLS change event is necessary to reduce attachment anxiety and to successfully reshape an attachment bond. I also cite recent research validating the importance of the WRE change event for lasting change.