



“Willing to” vs “Wanting to” are two different positions which are useful to reflect and get clarity about with regard to creating consensual agreement.

**Willing to...**

- It's your preference (not mine)
- I'm available for...
- I have access to my generosity
- I need to take care of my limits

**Wanting to...**

- It's my preference (not yours)
- I'm asking for...
- I have access to my needs and desires
- I must respect your limits

**Getting clear on our position in personal interactions**

**Willing to...**

It may be that someone asks something of me which I don't particularly want. Whilst that may be absolutely OK, there might also be a possibility of finding a genuine availability and willingness to give to the other. When I have the possibility of reflecting that the thing or interaction is for your benefit, not mine, I may find this willingness. It could be I find I am not wanting to, and I'm not willing to! It's nice to have options to be clear though. If a

willingness to give to the other is found, and we are able to give with an open heart, this is usually accompanied by a feeling of generosity. The feeling of generosity can be of great benefit to us. As social creatures we naturally want to be of service, and this can bring a very good feeling in our body and feelings, as well as a release of positive neurotransmitters; chemicals in our brain such as serotonin which have wide reaching health benefits!

Particularly if I am in a giving position, it is useful for me to take care of my own limits as to how much I really feel good to give. If I am unaware of how much I'm happily able to give, I may over-give in a way that leads to undesirable emotions, such as resentment, feeling under-valued, or even exhausted. It may also be useful to ask the question "How much am I actually able to give when I'm not within my own healthy limits?"

### **Wanting to...**

If I am aware there is something I really want, I need to notice this and choose if it's important for me to communicate it. If this is the case it helps if I put my preference, or desire first, so I'm able to be clear on what I want, and to ask. If I put your preferences first I may lose sight of what I wanted to ask, or deny I even had a preference.

### **What supports getting clear on what I want?**

- slow down, breath, feel the body and the feelings
- notice feelings, needs, desires
- value what I'm feeling is worth noticing
- communicate what I want
- accept I may receive a "yes" or a "no"
- respect the other person's limits and boundaries in how much they are willing to give

Asking for what we want sometimes demands courage. Most of us were not taught how to notice, value and communicate our desires. We may also have conditioning and negative internal messages which somehow state it's not good to ask, such as "children should be seen but not heard" and "ask never gets." These messages are not useful in supporting people to discover what they want in life, how to be authentic, and creating consensual agreement. We all have needs and desires as human beings. If we don't learn to value and ask in a straightforward manner, we will probably try to get our needs met in some other way, such as forcing or manipulating.

It can feel vulnerable to ask for what we truly want in life, but the alternatives are less appealing and may even be harmful for ourselves and others. When we allow ourselves to "feel the fear and do it anyway" we may encounter some vulnerability, but most likely we'll survive that temporary, uncomfortable feeling! Asking for what we want will support us to show up with more integrity and often leads to more intimacy in all our relationships across our life. "Willing to" vs "Wanting to" are useful stances for continued reflection in

personal dynamics. As we continue this journey of greater self-acceptance and self-value, we give permission to others to do the same.

### **Connection Work -journal**

1. What values are most important to myself ? in others?
2. Are the choices I make in alignment with these values?
3. How directly do I ask for what I want and need?
4. What can I do to be more direct in my communication?
5. If I hear a hidden meaning in a statement or a question do I ask for clarification before acting on my assumptions?
6. Do I perceive criticism in other peoples statements even if they aren't directly critical?
7. What do I do to check in with those that are close to me?
8. How well do I listen to others?
9. What do I do to make sure it is safe for another person to communicate with me and let them know it's safe?
10. Does my communication show that I take responsibility for my actions and emotions?