

Role Play

Let's use the example of household chores to illustrate what happens in a contemptuous relationship.

STEPS:

- read over the scene
- decided on who is playing the part
- take 3 to 5 minutes to internalize the emotions of the characters
- Remember you can "Improv" – "*Improvisation*, or *improv*, is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started."
- If you are feeling confident - try recording the action!
- Then reverse the roles.

SCENE:

You come home from a long, and stressful day at work to a messy house. You expect your spouse to help you clean because you had a hard day but he or she decides to sit down and watch T.V. after their long day.

An argument quickly ensues over whose turn it is to do the dishes or vacuum.

As the conflict gets more heated, you start rolling your eyes at your spouse who is trying to explain how he or she had an equally difficult day.

You start thinking to yourself, "They never put forth any effort. They are so lazy and annoying. I can't believe I am with them. They are ruining my life!"

You start rolling your eyes at him or her and finally say, "Oh, don't bother to get up and help. I'm sure your day was worse than mine and your time is more valuable than mine. I'm happy to be your slave."

NOTES:

Does that seem extreme? Unfortunately, this kind of exchange really happens in relationships. And it probably doesn't stop there. You can imagine the dialogue for part two of this interaction as the dissed partner fires back!

Did art imitate real life? Was this a difficult activity?

Perhaps not. But if it was difficult here is some advice.

Here is a better way to handle the situation. First, remember your partner cannot read your mind and though you have in mind something you wish to happen, you should not expect your partner to do something that hasn't been discussed openly (like the house should be clean when you get home).

Second, take the time to try and gain your composure. Remember your feelings are a reflection of the situation, not of the relationship as a whole. You can be upset your partner isn't helping but that doesn't make him or her a horrible person. They just may not have realized you wanted something to begin with.

Finally, communicate your needs with your partner. You can say something like, "I was hoping the house could get clean before we make dinner tonight. Would you mind cleaning the dishes while I vacuum?" Be direct and honest. Instead of pushing blame onto them for not helping, help them understand how you feel about the situation. Communication is also about listening. After telling your partner how you are feeling, remember also to listen to their point-of-view and feelings as well. Also, keep an open mind with their side of the story. There are two people involved! Sometimes it may be worth it to make a sacrifice to show love and devotion to your partner, as long as this does not become completely one-side and unfair.