

Marriage: The Foundation

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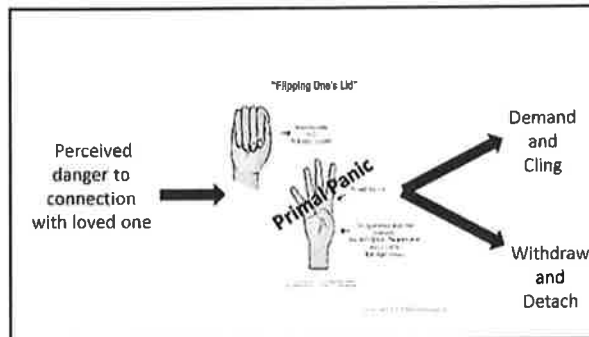
The Sound Relationship House

Trust: Shared Meaning
 Make Life Dreams Come True
 Manage Conflict

Commitment: The Positive Perspective
 Yarn Towards Instead of Away
 Share Fondness and Admiration
 Build Love Maps

Love as Survival Tool

- Love and connection are as critical to survival as physical nutrition
- Attachment
 - Monitor and maintain emotional and physical closeness to beloved
 - Reach out for this person when we are unsure, upset, or feeling down
 - Miss this person when we are apart
 - Count on this person to be there for us when we go out into the world to explore
- Application to Adult Love
 - Can I count on you, depend on you?
 - Are you there for me?
 - Will you respond to me when I need, when I call?
 - Do I matter to you?
 - Am I valued and accepted by you?
 - Do you need me, rely on me?



Demon Dialogues



Find the Bad Guy

- Attack - Attack
- Purpose: self-protection
- We are hurt by or feel vulnerable with our partner and suddenly become out of control.
- Reactive anger/Preemptive strike
- Mutual attack, accusation, and blame in attempt to be right
- Sensitive to signs of danger and increasingly reactive → restricted range of responses



Protest Polka

- Demand-Withdraw or Criticize-Defend
- Most common
- Purpose: Get a response that connects and reassures
- One partner critical and aggressive = protest the disconnection
- Other partner defensive and distant = protest implied criticism



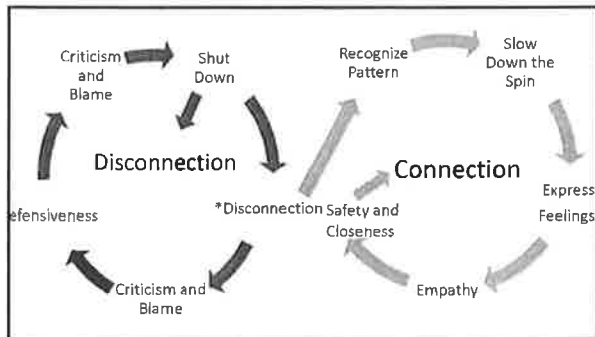
Freeze and Flee

- Withdraw – Withdraw
- Purpose: Self-protection
- Silence and tension
- Shut down into frozen defense and denial
- Hopelessness
- Can be polite and cooperative
- Little touching or eye contact
- Critical partner gives up trying to engage; eventually grieve / leave
- Withdrawn partner becomes aware of no connection; agrees to work on relationship



Changing the Steps

- Stay in the present and focus on what is happening between you right now.
- Look at the circle of criticism that spins both of you around. No true “start” to the circle.
- Recognize that no one has to be the bad guy. Pattern is the enemy!
- Recognize the dance:
The more I ____, the more you ____, then the more I ____, round and round we go.
- Own how each of you contribute.
- Learn to recognize calls for connection.
- Call out the enemy when you see it. Give it a name.
- Slow down, create safety, talk about attachment needs.



Emotional Responsiveness = A.R.E.

- Accessibility: Can I reach you?
 - Stay open to partner even when you have doubts and feel insecure
 - Tune into partner's attachment cues
- Responsiveness: Can I rely on you to respond to me emotionally?
 - Show that their emotions have an impact on you
 - Accepting and placing priority on emotional needs of partner
 - Send signals of comfort and caring when partner needs you
- Engagement: Do I know you will value me and stay close?
 - Special attention we give only to a loved one

Finding the Raw Spots

- Moments in past or current relationships when attachment need has been repeatedly neglected, ignored, or dismissed → emotionally deprived or deserted
- Clue 1: sudden radical shift in emotional tone of conversation
- Clue 2: reaction to perceived offense seems way out of proportion
- Plug into deeper, softer feelings connected to attachment needs / fears
- Know the danger cues and sensitivities to certain events that spark off attachment fears
- “We can heal even deep vulnerabilities with the help of a loving spouse.”

Vulnerability

The trigger for my raw feeling was _____.
On the surface, I probably showed _____.
But deep down, I just felt (sadness, anger, fear, shame) .
What I longed for was _____.
The main message I got about our bond, about me or my love was _____.

Homework

- A.R.E. Questionnaire
- What is the demon dialogue in which you find your relationship trapped?
- How does this pattern damage your relationship?
- What are the raw spots that make each of you feel scared or disconnected?



References and Resources

- John Gottman:** The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse
- *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*
- Sue Johnson:** Emotion-Focused Therapy and Demon Dialogues
- *Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*
- Dan Siegel:** Neuroscience
- *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*
 - *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are*

References and Resources

Brené Brown: Empathy and Vulnerability

Audio CD

- *The Gifts of Imperfect Parenting: Raising Children with Courage, Compassion, and Connection*

Books

- *I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't): Making the Journey from "What Will People Think?" to "I Am Enough"*
- *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*
- *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to be and Embrace Who You Are*
- *Rising Strong: The Reckoning, The Rumble, The Revolution*

Daring Way 3 –day intensive

www.daringway.com

A.R.E. Questionnaire

Read each statement and circle T for true or F for false. You can complete this questionnaire and reflect on your relationship on your own. Or you and your partner can each complete it and then discuss your answers together in the way described after the questionnaire.

From your viewpoint, is your partner accessible to you?

- T F 1. I can get my partner's attention easily.
- T F 2. My partner is easy to connect with emotionally.
- T F 3. My partner shows me that I come first with him/her.
- T F 4. I am not feeling lonely or shut out in this relationship.
- T F 5. I can share my deepest feelings with my partner. He/she will listen.

From your viewpoint, is your partner responsive to you?

- T F 1. If I need connection and comfort, he/she will be there for me.
- T F 2. My partner responds to signals that I need him/her to come close.
- T F 3. I find I can lean on my partner when I am anxious or unsure.
- T F 4. Even when we fight or disagree, I know that I am important to my partner, and we will find a way to come together.
- T F 5. If I need reassurance about how important I am to my partner, I can get it.

Are you positively emotionally engaged with each other?

- T F 1. I feel very comfortable being close to, trusting my partner.
- T F 2. I can confide in my partner about almost anything.
- T F 3. I feel confident, even when we are apart, that we are connected to each other.
- T F 4. I know that my partner cares about my joys, hurts, and fears.
- T F 5. I feel safe enough to take emotional risks with my partner.

To score the questionnaire, give one point for each "true" answer. If you scored 7 or above, you are well on your way to a secure bond. If you score below 7, this is a time to focus on strengthening the bond with your partner.

Follow up discussion questions:

1. Does your partner's perception of how accessible, responsive, and engaged you are fit with your view of yourself and how safe your relationship is? Try to remember that your partner is talking about how safe and connected he/she feels right now in your relationship, not about whether you are a perfect or imperfect partner.
2. Take turns talking about the question/answer that seemed most positive/important for you. (5 minutes each)
3. Explore the question/answer that seemed to bring up the most difficult emotions for you. Try to do this in the spirit of helping your partner tune in to your feelings. (5 minutes each)