

## Marriage: The Foundation

Jodie Elder, PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, CDWF



## Homework Processing

- 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?

What was this experience like for you?

What did you learn about...

- yourself?
- your partner?
- your relationship?

What change will you make as a result of what you learned?

## Forgiveness

- Relationship trauma – wound that plunges us into fear and helplessness, that challenges all our assumptions about predictability and control
- Violation of human connection
- “Never Again” stance

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” -- Anaïs Nin

## Healing Process

- Goal: forgiveness, renewed trust
- 1. Hurt partner speaks pain openly and specifically
  - Describe pain
  - Specific situation in which it occurred
  - How it affects your sense of safety with your partner
- 2. Injuring partner accepts responsibility
  - Stay emotionally present
  - Acknowledge partner’s pain
  - Accept your part in that pain
  - Express remorse, regret for pain you caused
  - Help hurt partner understand your response

## Healing Process

3. Hurt partner identify what you need right now to bring closure to trauma and ASK for it
  - Accept apology
4. Injuring partner meet those needs in the moment
5. Build a new story together
  - Short story about the painful event, how it impacted your relationship, and how you recovered and will ensure it doesn’t happen again

## Apologies

- Steps of an Effective Apology
  1. Express that you care about partner’s pain
  2. Tell partner that their pain is valid
  3. Express regret and guilt for hurtful behavior
  4. Reassure partner that you will help them heal
- Token Apologies
  - 4-second “where is the exit”
  - Minimizing responsibility
  - Forced
  - Instrumental

### Maintenance -- Safety

- Stay curious – Constantly build Love Maps
- Keep the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse out of conversations
- Team up against the Demon Dialogues
- Monitor relationship A.R.E. levels
- Respond with empathy

### Maintenance -- Resilient Relationship Story

- How you have built and are maintaining a loving connection
- How you get stuck in conflict & distance and how you repair & reconnect
  - Three adjectives to describe your relationship when insecure
  - Two verbs to capture how each of you moved in the negative dance and how you were able to change that pattern
  - One key moment when you saw each other differently, reached for each other
  - Three adjectives, emotions, or images that express your relationship now
  - One thing you can do to keep your connection growing

### Maintenance – Rituals of Connection

- Def: repeated, intentional ceremonies that recognize special time or connection; engage us emotionally and physically
- Magic 5 Hours per Week
  - Partings – goodbye, one thing happening in the day
  - Reunions – greet and debrief your days
  - Admiration and Appreciation – one way daily to convey affection and appreciation
  - Affection – hug, kiss, touch
  - Weekly date – update your love maps
- Schedule Sex and Romance
- Family Traditions and Rituals

### Maintenance – Dream Together

- Personal dreams – How can you support each other?
- Couple dreams – What do we want together?
- Family dreams – What are our values?
- Create a Mission Statement

### 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*

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