



Your Conflict Pattern

You just finished the second video in this course, congratulations! In this video, you learned that conflict in relationship tend to happen in a certain pattern. While we fight over many different things, we are actually fighting over one pattern, one blue print. In this worksheet, you will learn more about your specific pattern.

How We Get Defensive

Think about a stressful conversation you had with your partner. Go back in your mind to how it evolved and especially in the moments in which you felt the worst. In those moments, try to notice what was your way of defending yourself (protesting or protecting) and what was your partner's? Fill in the statements below.

When I get defensive I tend to:

When my partner gets defensive he/she tend to:

Common examples:

Protest / Attack: blame, criticize, get angry, raise your voice, talk really fast, demand, go after, be in their face.



Protect / Withdraw: stay quiet, look away, shut down the conversation, leave the room, ignore, dismiss.

Practice by filling in the blanks below:

"Can you see the cycle? The more I _____.

The more my partner _____ and

the more they _____, the more I _____

_____."

Discovering the Fear Underneath

Underneath our complaints about our partner there is usually a hidden fear that we don't recognize or don't communicate. The following exercise will help you discover your fear. Once you are done, you can try to figure out your partner's fear.

State a complaint you have about your partner succinctly (preferably in one sentence):

Looking at your complaint, ask yourself, *"why is it so hard for you that your partner is like that?"*



For example, if your complaint is “you’re too needy,” ask yourself – “why is it so hard for me that my partner is too needy?” Make sure your answer is about you and how you feel—not about your partner.

Next, take your previous answer and continue to ask yourself “what’s so hard for me about this?” (e.g. if your answer was “because I feel it’s a burden on me” ask yourself “why is it so hard for me that I feel burdened?”). Repeat this process several times until you don’t have a new answer anymore. What you discover is your underlying fear.
