

THE COUPLES CURE

Miraculous Recovery for Couples on the Brink

Identify Your Pattern (Conversation 1)

Destructive Patterns:

1. Mutual Blame: Find the bad guy
2. Protest/Defend Protest polka
3. Mutual Withdrawal

To figure out which yours is, the facts of a fight aren't the real issue.

See if you can summarize the pattern that takes over your relationship by filling in the blanks in the following statements. Then edit them into a paragraph that fits you and your relationship. Share this with your partner.

When _____, I do not feel safely connected to you.

Fill in the cure that starts up the music of disconnection, e.g., when you say you are too tired for sex and we have not made love for a few weeks, when we fight about my parenting, when don't seem to speak for days. NO big, general, abstract statements or disguised blaming is allowed here, so you can't say things like when you are just being difficult as usual. That is cheating. Be concrete and specific.

I tend to _____, I move this way in our dance to try to cope with difficult feelings and find a way to change our dance.

Choose an action word, a verb, e.g. complain, nag, zone out, ignore you, run, move away.

I do it in the hope that _____.

State the hope that pulls you into the dance, e.g. we will avoid more conflict or I will persuade you to respond to me more.

As this pattern keeps going, I feel _____.

Identify a feeling. The usual ones that people can identify at this point are frustration, anger, numbness, emptiness, or confusion.

What I then say to myself about our relationship is _____.

Summarize the most catastrophic conclusion you can imagine, e.g. you do not care about us, I am not important to you, I can never please you.

My understanding of the circular dance that makes it harder and harder for us to safely connect is that when I move in the way I described above, you seem to then _____.

Choose an action word, a verb, e.g. Shut down, push me to respond.

The more I _____, the more you _____. We are then both trapped in pain and isolation.

Insert verbs that describe your own and your partners' moves in the dance.

Maybe we can warn each other when this dance begins. We can call it _____. Seeing this dance is our first step out of the circle of disconnection.

Once you can identify these negative cycles and recognize that they trap both of you, you are ready to learn how to step out of them. The next conversation explores more deeply the strong emotions, particularly the attachment fears, that keep these negative dances going.