

# THE COUPLES CURE

## Miraculous Recovery for Couples on the Brink

### HOLDING SPACE EXERCISE

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For this exercise, choose ONE thing to do this week to practice holding space from the options below. Remember, the purpose of this is to practice mentally creating a space around them and between you, to invite them to bring themselves forward without fear of judgment. This is a mental exercise: Less is more.

- a. Option 1: Enter into a conversation that is a hot-button issue JUST for the sake of listening. No problem solving or positioning yourself. JUST listening. You can ask "I wanted to hear your side of this, and I want to just listen. Can you please share about what you want and what is at stake for you?" And then listen for the sake of trying to put yourself in their shoes. Release all urges to fix something or position yourself. Remember, that this is just to practice not reacting, but just taking in what they are saying. Know that you don't have to agree, you only have to hold space for them to feel heard. Give yourself at least 15 minutes, but no more than 30 minutes.
- b. Option 2: Ask your spouse about something that was hard for them in their life, or something that you suspect is currently bothering them. Pick something you know they would want to share and approach them with curiosity. Once they start talking, listen deeply, ask follow-up questions to get more information, and practice creating a large space for them to fill with their sharing. If they are sharing only a little bit, that's ok, just give them your full attention and communicate non-verbally: "This is the most important thing to me right now."
- c. Option 3: If your partner starts sharing something with you, tune in 100%. Wait for this opportunity to arise organically, and then give eye contact, stop what you are doing, listen completely, and release all thoughts. Just practice receiving them. Release all urge to respond unless it is to offer expressions of curiosity or empathy.

Whatever option you choose, remember that the focus is on staying silent and allowing them to experience whatever they are experiencing with you witnessing. Whatever pops into your head can wait. Tune everything else out!

Afterwards, write down what came up for you by answering these questions:

1. What did you notice inside your mind during this time? (Did you think negative thoughts about them or the relationship?)
2. What did you notice physically? (Did you start getting antsy, or become internally agitated?)
3. What was the hardest thing about this exercise?
4. What is one thing you want to focus on going forward (or what is one takeaway?)

The purpose of these questions is to help you gain a greater internal awareness of the barriers that block you from truly receiving your partner. This is all about getting yourself out of the way, so that you can truly connect with the other in a deeper way.