

Hope Focused Self-Help Workbook



Introduction

Finding ways to keep a relationship alive and strong can be a challenging task in the midst of all the other things in our lives that compete for our attention. This workbook will provide you with information and exercises that will aim to bring you closer together as a couple, teach you skills for more effective communication and conflict resolution, and increase your passion, desire, and commitment to one another as well as your relationship. In this workbook, you will have the opportunity to complete several exercises that will give you insight into your relationship and its strengths and weaknesses. You will also gain a better understanding of how your feelings, behaviors, and beliefs influence your relationship, and what changes you can make to function more effectively as a couple. The exercises can be completed in the workbook, hence serving as a written record of the reflections and self-evaluations you have engaged in individually, as well as the progress you have made as a couple. The workbook can also serve as a resource to go back to and reference throughout your relationship and in the future. If desired, the exercises can be completed in a separate notebook or journal, which can also be used to write further thoughts and reflections or to record your feelings and reactions to the material as you work through the exercises.

The workbook was created for couples that wanted material they could work through with one another and individually, without the extensive involvement of a marriage therapist. Although there is an abundance of various books available on the topic of marriage and relationships, few of them provide a two-way interaction between the writer and the readers. Reading material is better and easier to process when it engages the readers in exercises that help them apply the information they have read. This workbook will provide not only information for you to read, but also exercises for you to participate in and discuss with your partner that will engage you as a couple in a variety of ways. For example, it will provide you with the skills necessary to build a foundation for your relationship that will be stronger than before. It will also provide you with the tools that your relationship will benefit from, as long as you implement them. Simply put, some couples have a reactive approach to life, reacting to difficulties instead of being prepared to face them together. However, by completing this workbook, you will create a proactive approach (rather than being reactive) to solving issues, difficulties, and problems as they arise while building the skills that will aid in the formation of a healthy relationship. It is important to note that building a strong relationship requires effort and work. This workbook will guide you through that process by emphasizing

which areas of your relationship need the most work, and focusing your efforts in the right places.

Why a workbook?

In the last decade, a wide variety of individuals have turned to the use of self-help workbooks for assistance and treatment with a variety of problems and disorders. Such individuals have taken advantage of the plentiful resources available to care for their own struggles, whether with the help of a clinician or independently. Not only is it often more accessible and affordable than meeting with a therapist, but you can also do it out of the comfort of your own home.

The Hope Focused Couples Approach

This workbook uses interventions that are adapted from the Hope Focused Couples Approach (HFCA). Developed by Everett Worthington, HFCA is a strategic couple therapy approach that uses the concept of hope as its central premise. The core tenants of faith, work, and love are introduced as the necessary ingredients required for a healthy relationship.

Faith may consist of a belief that you will be able to reach your goal, a sense of confidence that this workbook will be able to guide you through a difficult time, or a faith that God will restore your relationship and bring about healing and restoration.

The concept of work consists of the time, energy, and effort required to bring your relationship to a desired level.

Lastly, love consists of valuing your partner and not engaging in hurtful and devaluing behaviors toward one another.

The really great thing about HFCT is that it has been empirically supported as an evidence-based approach for couples therapy; meaning that several research studies demonstrate that it works! Notably, HFCT is one of the four empirically validated forms of couples enrichment treatment in the United States and has been empirically validated as a treatment to improve couples communication and improve relational satisfaction. This workbook therefore will serve as a tool to make the approach available to you in an easily accessible manner. You will be able to engage in these exercises at any time and place that is most convenient for you.

A Roadmap to the Workbook

This workbook is divided into 8 modules. Don't worry. You don't have to do all 8 modules to get what you need. Instead, you will decide what is helpful to you first and do

that module. Then you keep going with modules until you feel like you have gotten what you need. Each module will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Feel free to spend more time on it as you see fit and as it applies to your relationship. Each module includes the following elements:

Description of Intervention: *Provides an overview of the intervention and will give you a general idea of what the exercise will consist of.*

Goals of Intervention: *The general goals for your relationship that the module will seek to accomplish.*

Video Link for Demonstration: *some modules contain illustrations of the exercise taken from clips of couples participating or using the technique, usually with a counselor commenting on the process.*

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: *This is the fun part. You will get to try it out on your own and with each other. Some of the exercises might make reference to a worksheet, which is provided immediately following each module. Other exercises do not require a worksheet, in which case a worksheet will not be mentioned.*

Instructions for Use: *Complete one module per week in the order that they appear in this workbook. Consider this an adventure that you are on together. May this book help you on your journey to creating a happy and successful relationship!*

Module 1: Personal Relationship Vision Statements

Description of Intervention: *In this module you will explore the visions for your relationship. By clarifying your positive values, you will affirm one other and focus on your shared bond by increasing hope and unity in your relationship.*

Goals of Intervention: *Creating a vision statement together that will help you develop a sense of common purpose and meaning.*

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: *Create vision statements together and fill out the below information. Reference the Core Vision worksheet for further information.*

a. *Your individual life purposes and goals:* _____

b. *Your personal faith journeys and histories, and how they relate to your relationship vision and goals:* _____

c. *Search the Internet for information on writing vision statements.*

Then, reflect as a couple on these questions:

d. *“Why do we exist as a couple?”* _____

e. *Do we have a purpose or ministry as a couple apart from our individual ministries?* _____

f. *Create a common vision statement for your relationship:* _____

g. *Consider yourselves 5, 10 and 20 years in the future. What does your relationship look like?* _____

h. *What things will it take to get to your vision of your future together?* _____



Core Vision worksheet

Do you ever think about what your relationship might look like in 1 year, 5 years, or 20 years? This exercise will help you to develop or clarify your relationship vision and even create a core vision statement for your relationship. A core vision is a common focus, direction, or goal for your relationship. It is important for couples to have a common vision for their relationship, as this vision will help guide and direct you through happy and difficult times alike.

As a couple, select two or three characteristics you would like to include in your vision statement. Examples could include (but are not limited to):

- 1. Intentional commitment/persistence*
- 2. Positive values*
- 3. Lead by serving & giving first*
- 4. Humor and fun*
- 5. Being overcomers of difficulties*
- 6. Meeting each other's needs*
- 7. Being a team*
- 8. Giving love, affection and support*
- 9. Networking in the community*
- 10. Open communication*
- 11. Investing in the next generation*
- 12. Quality time*

As a couple, write a core vision statement that incorporates the two or three characteristics you selected. There are no right or wrong answers. Every couple has their own unique vision that reflects their unique relationship. Once you have created your relationship vision statement, write it on a special piece of paper as a reminder of your relationship's vision.

What obstacles might you encounter that may hinder your ability to follow your vision?

How might you overcome these obstacles? _____



Description of Intervention: *This module is for couples that would like to increase their communication skills. As a couple, this can help you to practice good communication and listening skills through learning a structured way to communicate.*

TANGO is a method of communicating that helps people understand each other's meanings. It teaches couples to use a script for good communication to guide what to say. However, the specific steps for the intervention are not the important part of the intervention. What is important is that both of you learn the principles for good communication by eventually incorporating TANGO naturally into your communication.

The acronym for TANGO is:

Partner 1:

- **Tell** what happened: *state things simply and with care in your voices and nonverbal behaviors*
- Explain how it **Affected** you: *(Ex. I felt upset when you were late because I felt like you put work above me)*

- Tell your partner a **Nurturing** statement (Ex. I know that you love me and try to prioritize getting home on time most days of the week)

Partner 2

- **Got** it? (State a summary of what partner said to ensure that you understood it correctly)
- **Observe** how this is affecting us (Note how the conversation is going. Is it healthy? Or is it hurtful? See if this feels better for you than the pattern of your usual communication)

Once you master TANGO, you do not have to communicate using the above steps but rather incorporate the basic principles into your everyday communication. Important principles to remember are:

- Take turns talking.
- Really listen to your partner, and do not just think of the next thing you'll say.
- Slow down the conversation.
- Infuse difficult conversations with loving statements.
- Do not make assumptions; make sure you understand each other.

Now to practice, choose a topic. To start, it should be a topic that is something you really do need to communicate about but not something that will cause you to be upset. The selection of the topic is very important and can cause the exercise to be effective if selected well or ineffective if too "hot." Practice using the TANGO guidelines. You can talk this through or write it down to practice.

T:

A:

N:

G:

O:

Goals of Intervention: *Communication principles can be learned through an exercise that creates a strong situation that promotes good communication. Creating the situation of good communication, with rehearsal and reflection allows you to build skills with hope that you can use to improve your relationship.*

Video Link for Demonstration: *Watch this brief video of a couple practicing the TANGO exercise for communication on www.hopecouples.com within the E-Hope link, click on “A TANGO principles to help communicate more effectively” Within the page, click on “Step 3: Watch this brief video of a couple practicing the TANGO exercise for communication” (Length 5 mins 04 secs)*

Or

Click on the direct link:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/media/fms/vod/singlePlayerURL.cfm?address=2000612>

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: *Complete the TANGO for Communication worksheet together as a couple*

TANGO for Communication worksheet

Speaker:

T: Tell what happened directly and briefly

This is the time to tell your partner about your perspective. Be brief and to the point, like a news reporter.

A: Affected me

At this point, share how what happened affected you. Try to use a feeling word (hurt, mad, scared, etc.)

N: Nurturing statement

Tell your partner something you appreciate or value about them.

Listener:

G: Got it?

Reflect back what you heard your partner saying. You don't have to get it word-for-word, but do try to get the main points of what happened, how it affected them, and the nurturing statement. Partners can let each other know if they "got it" or not and clarify if needed.

O: Observe effects

At this time, both of you should take a step back to see how the conversation is effecting you emotionally. If either of you feel you are becoming too emotional to talk right now, take a time out and come back to the conversation at a later time.

If you both feel ok to keep talking, then keep TANGOing. At this point, speaker and listener will switch so that the other person can share their perspective.

Keep taking turns being speaker and listener until you feel that you have talked through the issue and understand each other's perspectives.





Description of Intervention: *Your relationship can be compared to a love bank where each positive loving and valuing action is a deposit, but each negative action is a withdrawal. The cumulative effect of too few deposits and too many withdrawals would lead to both your bank account and your relationship to take a big hit. On the contrary, if your bank account is filled with many positive deposits, if a withdrawal takes place, it does not affect the bank account as much (or your relationship). Some withdrawals (negative action) take more from the bank account than other withdrawals. You might have "nickel" withdrawals like forgetting to pick up your clothes from the bathroom. Or you might have "high cost" withdrawals like threatening to leave the relationship. In the same way some love deposits are small, like a quick kiss, while others are huge deposits like throwing a fun birthday party for your mate.*

This activity will help you to increase your closeness. If you are concerned that love and romance are lacking in your relationship then this exercise is for you! Using the Love Bank will help to increase positive interactions, hope, and intimacy in your relationship.

Goals of Intervention: *This intervention helps increase the positives in the relationship hence building closeness and intimacy.*

Video Link for Demonstration: *Watch a brief video that will demonstrate how a couple discusses their need for positive interactions in order to increase their love bank. It will serve as a good demonstration for how this discussion can progress. Access the video through www.hopecouples.com within the E-Hope link, click on "Investing in your*

lovebank (for couples)” Within the page, click on “Step 3: Watch this brief video of a couple practicing the Love Bank exercise.” (Length 3 mins 4 secs)

Or

Click on the direct link:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/media/fms/vod/singlePlayerURL.cfm?address=2000611>

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: Complete the Love Bank worksheet

Love Bank worksheet

Directions: List 10 behaviors you can do that would please your partner and make him/her feel loved (Investments in Love Bank). Then list 5 Behaviors that you do that bother or hurt your partner that you could reduce (Reducing Withdrawals from the Love Bank). After completing the list trade with partner, and talk about the discussion questions listed at the end of this exercise.

Investments

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Reducing Withdrawals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Discussion Questions:

1. What items did the other person list accurately?

2. What items were you surprised to see listed?

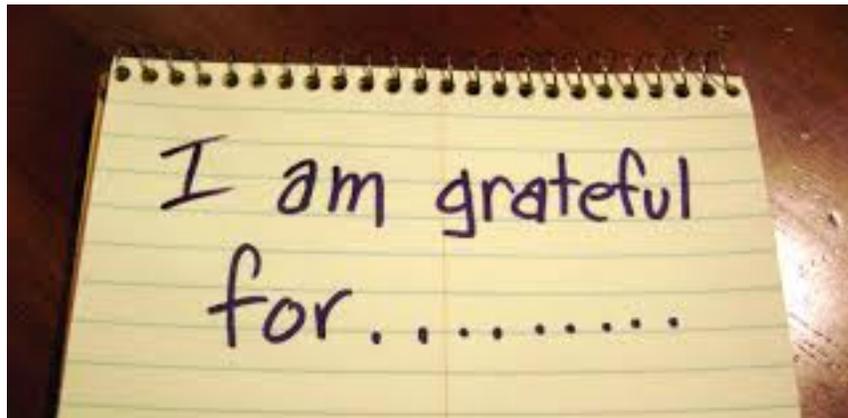
3. What items would you add to the list?

4. What will each of you commit to do differently this week to increase your Love Bank Balance this week?

Module 4: Gratitude

Description of Intervention: *This intervention will coach you to use gratitude as an effective method of increasing positivity in your relationship. It offers a practical way to use the virtue of gratitude to strengthen your relationship by allowing both of you to feel appreciated.*

Gratitude is being thankful or appreciative of something. Partners that feel appreciated, tend to show more appreciation, be more committed, cooperative and positive in their relationship. All of this increases the bond between partners, which is an important aspect of your relationship.



Goals of Intervention: *Use of the virtue of gratitude can help increase valuing, positive statements and decrease selective negative behavior observations and negative attributions in your relationship.*

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: *From the list below (or from your own ideas), pick at least two exercises to engage in this week to increase your gratitude for one another:*

- *Express appreciation and gratitude toward each other and reflect on experiencing that once a day.*
- *Keep a daily gratitude journal listing things about your partner or relationship that you are grateful for. Share it with one another at the end of the week.*

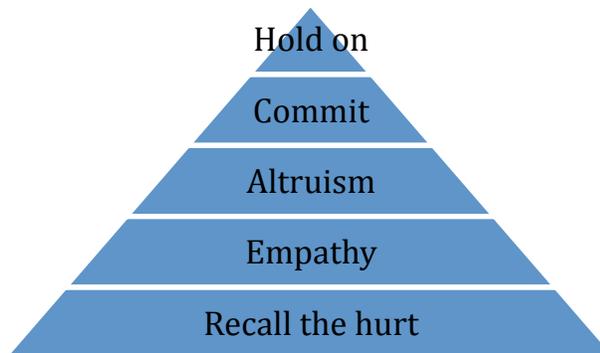
- *Send each other notes, emails or texts of gratitude several times during the week.*
- *Partners who thank God can express gratitude to God for their partner during daily worship or prayer.*
- *Partners who are parents can say appreciative things about their partner to their children.*
- *It can be quite powerful to express gratitude for your partner in front of important people in your life such as friends, coworkers or family members.*

There are endless creative possibilities ...

Make a commitment. What will you try this week to exercise gratitude in your relationship? Try and do something each day for ten days, although it doesn't have to be the same thing.

What did you do?

Description of Intervention: *The REACH model can be used to help move you as a couple from a place of holding on to hurts, to giving the gift of forgiveness. You can achieve this through developing empathy and making a decision to forgive.*



REACH is an acrostic to help you remember the five steps. The letters in REACH are explained below.

R- *Recall the event. It is important for people to accurately and honestly remember the offense. For couples working on an offense within their relationship, this can be difficult because their perceptions of the offense may differ widely. But, if each spouse can respect that their partner has a different experience that can help you as a couple to move forward. Ask each other about the offense, but also solicit the person's feelings and the impact that the event might have had on their life. Such as "how did you feel when I was late for dinner?" When you finally deal with an event in your relationship, it is good not to get caught up in the details of the offense because it can lead you away from reconciliation and cause you to instead focus on less important information. Rather, accept each other's emotional experience of the offense as a genuine expression of your perception.*

E- *Empathize with the offender. To forgive, positive emotions must replace the negative unforgiveness. Few people really want to destroy another person's life. Think back. You have probably hurt someone in the past. You probably did not get up in the morning and say, "Today, I plan to ruin a life." Rather, you probably intended to do good for the person, but it blew up in the process. See if you can just compose a letter out loud to give the other person's point of view.*

Offenses in close relationships "hurt more" because the relationship is so important. Couples often feel that, because they empathize with each other, their partner "should have known" the impact of the offense on the relationship and on the partner. The E part of the model is to help you increase your empathy for each other within the offense. Speculate on what you think the other person was thinking and feeling, again under the assumption that people usually are not intent on hurting the other person, but things just

went badly once the interaction began. After an empathic speculation, let the offending partner say how accurate that was. This helps the offended partner build and exercise empathy, but it also helps the offending partner know that the other person can understand their point of view and might think the best of them rather than think nothing but accusation.

A- Altruistic Gift. Forgiveness is characterized as an altruistic gift, which means the purpose is for the good of the other person. Humility is one of the parts of this principle. When learning the method, partners will reflect on when they have needed to be forgiven in the past, either in their relationship or (preferably) other relationships. They are to find a time when they did not expect nor deserve forgiveness but the person—perhaps a parent, a schoolteacher, a Scout leader—simply forgave them.

The important part of recalling the experience of having been forgiven by a person is to reflect on how receiving that forgiveness felt. Would you like to give that gift to your partner?

C- Commit to Forgive. It solidifies the experience and also helps people maintain the forgiveness if you can make some kind of commitment of forgiveness. If the commitment can be made relatively public (that is, not just a silent experience in their heart, but at a minimum written down), the forgiveness is more memorable and persuasive.

You can also do any of a number of commitment exercises. Common interventions for this step in forgiveness include creating a certificate or writing a letter of forgiveness. The principles of writing this letter include making a clear and direct statement of forgiveness, without justifications. The forgiveness letter can communicate a decision and also share how you commit to reducing negativity in the relationship and replacing it with positive emotions. You also could create a certificate of forgiveness, write a “short-hand” account in ink on their hand (like, “abused”) and then wash it off, or do a number of other symbolic gestures like burning a note with the offense written on it.

You might also want to tell your minister, some close friends or family, or a church small group of your commitment to forgive. You should gauge if these people are safe to share with, and likely to keep confidences as requested.

H- Hold onto Forgiveness. Forgiveness is an emotional event in an ongoing relationship. Once offered and committed to, then it is highly likely that events will ensue in the future that will cause strong feelings to recur. New offenses can cause this, of course, so if the offender offends again, that is a new offense that must be dealt with. But many times, seeing a forgiven offender or even thinking about the forgiven offense will cause feelings of anger and anxiety to arise.

These feelings of anger and anxiety are often misinterpreted. People think that the forgiveness must have failed. Not at all! Life stress, being tired or even reminders of the offense in a TV show can cause the old feelings to resurface. But instead of being unforgiving, they are merely conditioned responses to something that harmed us in the past. They do not indicate unforgiveness. Let's use an example from cooking. Suppose a person burns his or her hand on a hot stove burner. After it heals, the person unaware gets his or her hand near to a burner again. As the heat touches the skin, the person responds with automatic anger and fear. That is not an indication that he or she has not "forgiven" the stove. Rather, those emotions are attached to that old experience.

Goals of Intervention: *Repeating the REACH Forgiveness steps can help increase emotional forgiveness. Particularly empathy and altruism can help partners return to a feeling of being forgiving.*

Video Link for Demonstration: *This presentation will walk you through the five-step process after a hurt. The steps shared here will help you express your hurt, empathize with your partner, and commit to forgiving your partner. Access the presentation on www.hopecouples.com within the E-Hope link, click on "I want to forgive, but how?" Within the page, click on "Step 3: Watch this presentation and the Video on the REACH Model of Forgiveness. REACH Narrated Powerpoint"*

Or

Click on the direct link:

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/jennrip-1977763-reach-narrated-powerpoint/>

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: *REACH worksheet*

REACH worksheet

Directions: Identify an issue that you would like to explore with the REACH model. Initially, you may want to start with less emotionally charged events before moving on to greater offenses. Once you have selected an appropriate event, please use the five steps to begin a process of forgiveness.

*1) **R**: Recall the hurt (reflect on it and whether your feelings intensify upon recollection; perhaps rate level of intensity, 1-10): Low intensity 1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6 ---- 7 ---- 8 ---- 9 ---- 10 highest intensity*

*2) **E**: Empathize with the transgressor (try to see the event through the eyes of the offending person; imagine his/her thoughts and feelings at the time)*

*3) **A**: Altruistic gift of forgiveness (reflect on times you have hurt others and received forgiveness -from others and from God- and how you felt)*

*4) **C**: Commit to forgiveness (commit to extend the grace/forgiveness you have received to the offender and commit to a process of emotionally forgiving over time as you replace negative feelings with more positive feelings)*

*5) **H**: Hold onto emotional forgiveness (it's normal to have doubts from time to time, but hold onto the forgiveness. Some may make a certificate stating time and date to remind them of when they forgave the offender, or make a memento to remind themselves of the decision they made when in doubt.)*

REACH Narrative Worksheet

Directions: Take some time and read through the narrative. After reading through the narrative, answer the questions below it regarding how you would react to the specific situation.

After a long day at work your partner returns home. You are excited to greet your partner and to talk about your day with him or her. But then, your partner walks in the door and immediately snaps at you regarding the condition that the house is in. You have been working all day as well, so this comes across as being extremely rude and unfair. You address this and your partner states that he or she worked much harder than you at work and it was your responsibility to take care of the house. The conversation escalates and you decide to walk away. Later on, your partner comes to apologize to you for the comments that he or she made.

i) How would you feel if your partner made comments like this to you?

ii) How difficult would it be for you to feel forgiveness toward your partner?

iii) How difficult would it be for you to express forgiveness toward your partner?

iv) What would forgiveness look like for you?

v) How would you use the REACH Model to begin the process of forgiving in this situation?

Module 6: Misunderstandings and Attributions

Description of Intervention: *Why do partners do the things they do? This module is for couples that find it hard to understand each other's behavior and may sometimes attribute negative intentions to positive actions.*

Attributions are thoughts or beliefs about a person's behavior. So if your partner were to bring a gift home to you, what would you believe about that gift-giving? Is the gift because the person loves you? Or is the gift just a lame apology for another hurtful action? Your beliefs can make or break your relationship. If you tend to interpret your partner's actions with a negative frame-of-reference, it will be difficult for your partner to communicate love, forgiveness, and commitment to you. For example, do you or your partner often view each other's actions in a negative light? Do you interpret his or her acts of kindness as methods of manipulation or coercion? If so, then you may be guilty of experiencing negative attributions about your partner's actions.

Attributions can be positive or negative and accurate or inaccurate. It's the negative and inaccurate attributions that often lead to trouble within relationships. The research for over 25 years has shown that strong negative attributions can lead to relational dissatisfaction. This module will help you identify and re-evaluate common interactions that are perceived as negative, and develop a more fair and positive understanding for each other and one another's actions and behaviors.

Goals of Intervention: *This module will help you to re-evaluate the way you think about your partner and your relationship.*

Video Link for Demonstration: *This presentation will help you identify common interactions that are perceived as negative in intent, to check out the actual intention of your partner, and to create new attributions to what you may attribute as being negative. Access the presentation on www.hopecouples.com within the E-Hope link, click on "Why do we misunderstand each other?" Within the page, click on "Step 3: Watch this brief presentation. This presentation can be watched separately or together to learn more about attributions and misunderstanding"*

Or

Click on the direct link:

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/jennrip-1966238-attributions-misunderstandings/>

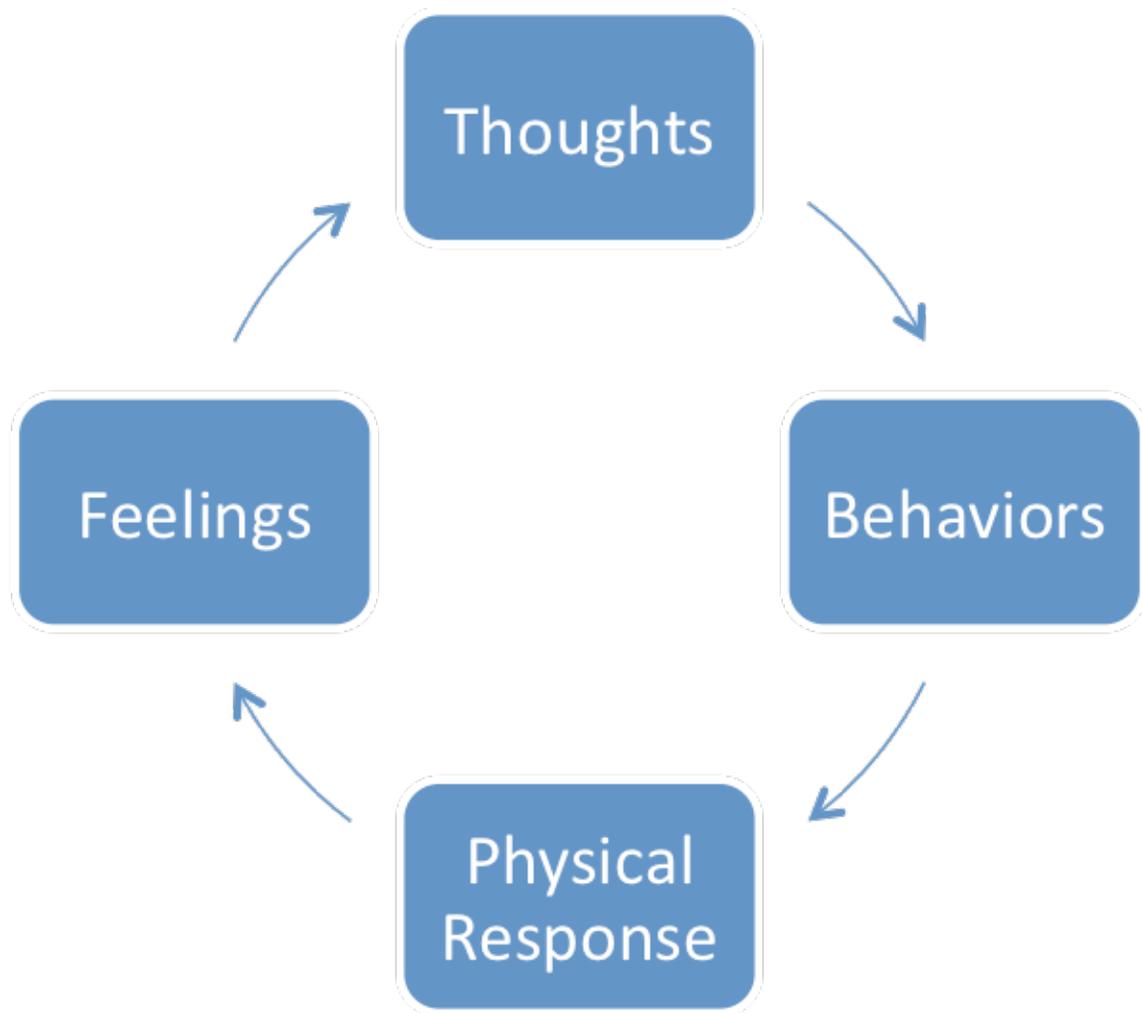
Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: Relationship Attributions and Theory A versus Theory B worksheet

Relationship Attribution worksheet

Think of a time that your partner did something that you found annoying, frustrating or perhaps inconsiderate. Follow the chart below and write your responses in the spaces provided. Be mindful of what you know to be fact, and what you're attributing to your partner's behavior based on your emotions or general assumptions.

Describe the situation:

Why is my partner doing this?



Thoughts (what were you thinking?)

Behaviors (what did you do?)

Physical Response (how did you respond to your partner?)

Feelings (how did you feel?)

Theory A versus Theory B worksheet

Compare two theories. Consider two possible reasons why your partner might be acting negatively – one positive and one negative. Positive examples might be fear, stress, or a bigger picture that reflects the interest of the family. The second theory tests whether the partner is acting out of negative intent. If you are having difficulty identifying reasons for why your partner is positive, consider why you decided to commit to him or her in the first place.

Theory A: Partner is positive	Theory B: Partner is negative

Which theory is more accurate? Why? _____

If you've decided that Theory A is more accurate, revisit the Relationship Attribution Worksheet and reconsider your response. How are your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors different?

Module 7: Love Busters

Description of Intervention: This module will teach you to identify negative triggers that you say or do in your relationship. Common examples are, “You always ignore me,” or “You’re selfish, just like your father!” “I’m leaving you” or simply refusing to talk/stone-walling. After identifying love busters, you will work together to create a strategy to avoid them. Just identifying triggers can be an important skill for you to develop.

Goals of Intervention: Identifying love-busting as a problem in your relationship will reduce your attacks and put-downs.

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: Engage in the exercise below:

Step 1: Identify “love busters” that have occurred. This should be done gently and when you are both feeling calm. If you appear to become activated with anger at the memories then stop and process what you are feeling. It is not necessary to list every “bust” in your relationship, just some that are relevant. Below are a few examples of common love busters.

1. You never take out the garbage!
2. Why do you always have to nag and complain about everything?
3. You are so self-centered that it hurts talking to you right now

Create your own list below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 2: Talk about what was happening in the context of the “love bust.” Were there circumstances that helped contribute to the offensive act?

Was the time especially stressful? Identifying the circumstances or context is important to helping you identify high-risk times, situations or topics in your relationship.

Step 3: Discuss how to avoid offending each other with love-busts. Generally, you should be discussing times when you might want to stop a bust or share things that can trigger the initial love-bust. It’s helpful to examine what non-verbal or verbal cues would indicate when a redirect or a “time out” might be needed. You can be creative to create your own strategy for handling love busts. How would you both like to handle love-busts?

Step 4: When the inevitable love bust happens, you need to discuss ways to repair the damage. This step may be paired in time with an apologies or forgiveness intervention (discussed above) if the additional support is necessary. Some couples are also able to find natural ways of repairing their relationship after a love bust. What would work for you?

Module 8: Vow Making

Description of Intervention: You will be creating unique vows that will allow you to bond over what is important for your relationship and then share the vows with each other (and others) in a re-covenanting experience. This will bring about a conclusion to the time you have invested into completing this workbook and symbolize the efforts you have contributed to growing your relationship.

If you are married, do you remember the vows you made to one another on your wedding day? You may have used traditional vows that have been around for centuries or you may have creatively crafted your own. In either case, a vow is a solemn promise or pledge that is given to demonstrate a commitment that is made.

Goals of Intervention: Re-writing relationship vows for your relationship today will increase your relationship bond.

Video Link for Demonstration: This presentation can help you increase your intimacy with your spouse, as you will together create vows for your relationship. Access the presentation on www.hopecouples.com within the E-Hope link, click on “Making Vows and commitments to each other” Within the page, click on “Step 3: Watch this brief presentation. This presentation can be watched separately or together to learn more about Vow-Making.”

Or

Click on the direct link:

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/jennrip-1975759-vow-making/>

Exercise for Couple to Complete Together: Vow-Making worksheet

Also, write down the vows you would make today for your relationship. They should be creative and talk about things relevant to your marriage today. You should then say the vows out loud to each other, either in an enrichment group, in counseling, or perhaps within your church. Some couples have created an event for the renewal of vows like a party or gathering of friends. A social media posting (like Facebook©) might be an

option for those of you who are reluctant or unable to have an in-person announcement of your vows.

Vow-Making worksheet



What vows would you make today for your relationship? How would you covenant to love one another from this day forward? Take some time to discuss with your spouse those things that are relevant to your relationship today. Explore your sense of God's plan for you in the future. Then, write out your vows to each other. This may be humorous or solemn; it may be romantic, sappy, or tender; you may create it in the form of a song, a poem, or a letter. As a couple, you are unlike any other. You do not need to please anyone with this – it is for you. Be as creative and unique as you can!

You will then share your vows with each other and can either choose to keep them as is or re-create them to combine your vows as a couple.

What vows would you create for your relationship today? Use the space below to write out your thoughts.
