

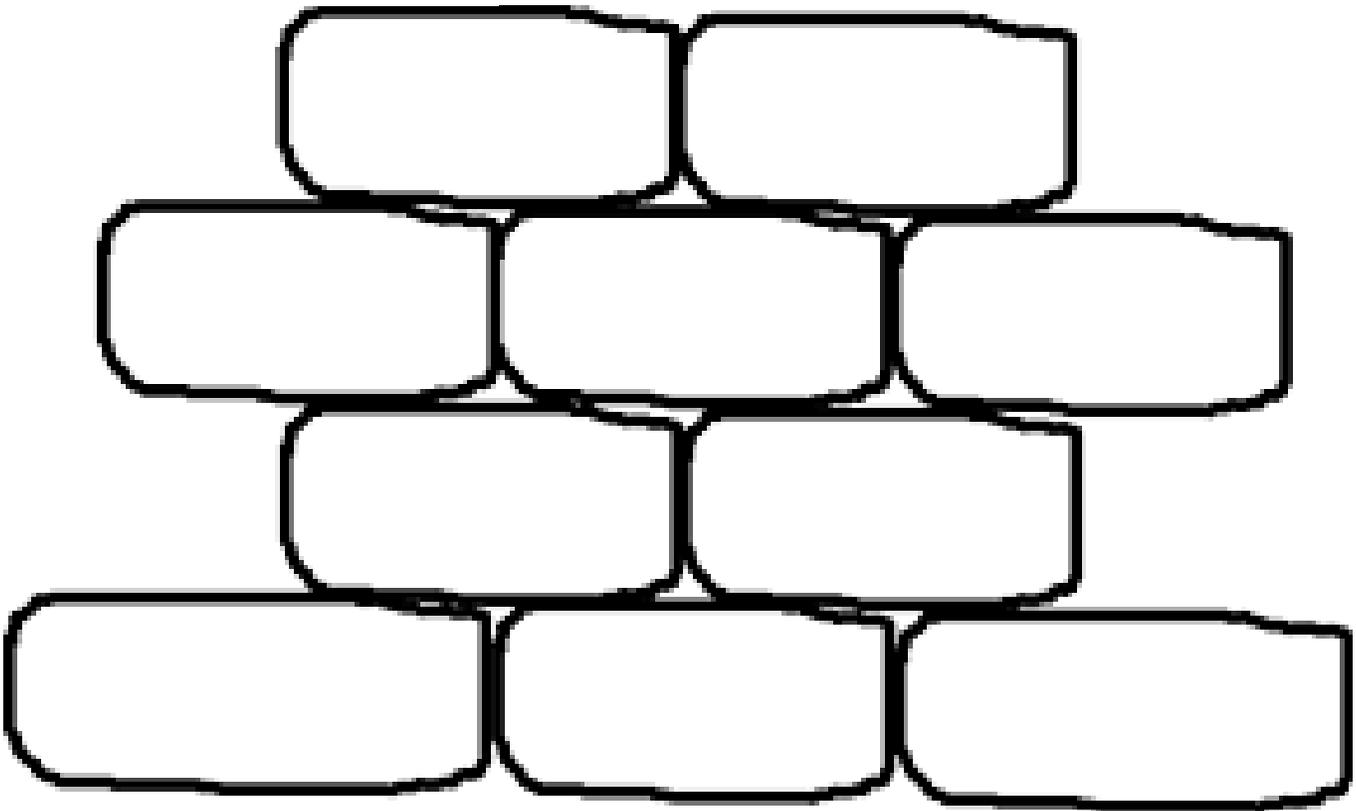
Couples Work Booklet

Communication, Conflict Resolution

Keeping your connection; keys to keeping conflict to a minimum; how to resolve conflict in healthy ways; and, 5 phase conflict action plan.



Wall of Disconnection:



THE TOP 4 RELATIONSHIP SECRETS - keys to keeping conflict to a minimum and to bring back connection:

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

Personality Test:

Reference: *Pressing the Right Buttons: People Skills for Business Success* by Allison Mooney (2010)

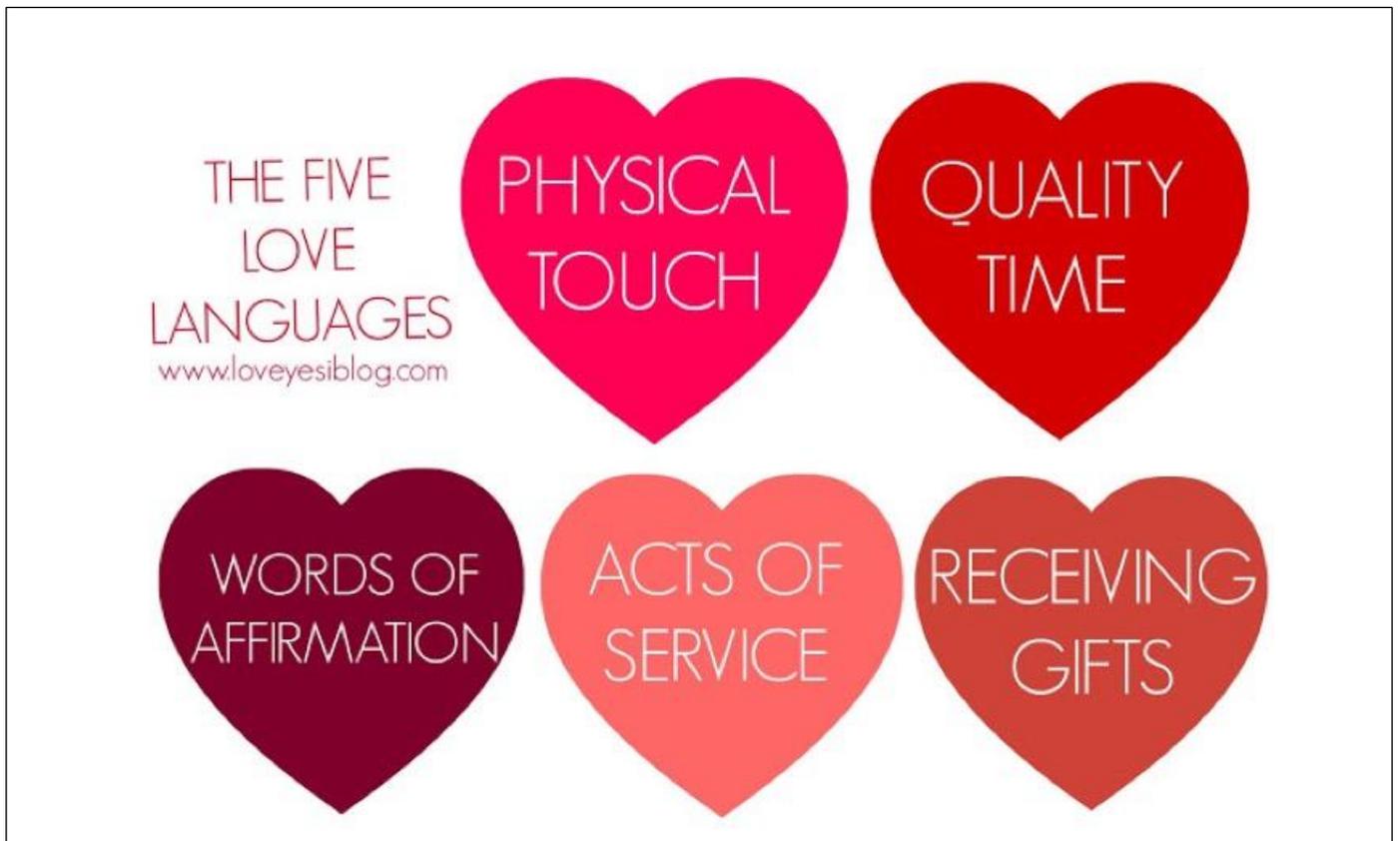
<http://allisonmooney.co.nz/pressing-buttons/>

Circle all the words and statements that you feel best describe you.

PLAYFUL		POWERFUL	
Come on, it will be OK!		Let's not waste any more time and get moving!	
Enthusiastic	Friendly	Ambitious	Goal-driven
Outgoing	Loves variety	Decisive	Commands
Innovative	Imaginative	Enjoys challenges	Independent
Energetic	Playful	Quick	Visionary
Motivator	Positive	Single-minded	Productive
Social	Bubbly	Bold	Doer
Takes chances	Funloving	Likes to lead	Daring
Forgiving	Loves gatherings	Achievement-driven	Opinionated
Expressive	Open	Adventurous	Competitive
Enjoys new things	Animated	Decision-maker	Change agent
Talker	Promoter	Action oriented	Restless
PEACEFUL		PRECISE	
Loyal	Balanced	High ideals	Well mannered
Patient	Dependable	Tidy	Persistent
Non-demanding	Understanding	Cool	Detailed
Level-headed	Mediator	Reserved	Calculating
Calming	Nurturing	Predictable	Loves the arts
Likes routine	Dry humour	Practical	Thorough
Dislikes change	Tolerant	Intentional	Critical thinker
Enjoyable	Good listener	Factual	On time
Accepting	Easy-going	Evaluates	Ordered
Steady	Willing	Cautious	Proper
Approachable	Relaxed	Particular	Musical
Don't worry, be happy!		A place for everything, and everything in its place!	

My Top Emotional Needs:

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



Core Values and Guidelines of Healthy Communication

Note to self:

- ❖ Our first goal in a conversation is to _____ one another.
- ❖ My thoughts, feelings and needs are valuable and important, and _____.
- ❖ I do not participate in _____ conversations. When my _____, _____, and _____ are devalued in a conversation I will _____ the conversation and set a clear boundary. Until _____ is restored I will not participate.
- ❖ We need to communicate our true feelings and needs to establish _____ and _____.
- ❖ It's my job to tell you what is going on inside me, and your job to tell me what's going on inside you. We do not have powers of telepathy or _____ we know one another's motives, thoughts, feelings or needs.
- ❖ The best way to _____ my feelings and needs to you is to use "I messages" and clear, specific statements that show what I am _____ and _____.
- ❖ I will not expect you to know my _____ and _____ unless I have _____ them to you.
- ❖ I will not make _____ statements or tell you how _____ in order to meet my needs.
- ❖ When you _____ your needs to me, it is my job to _____ well so I can understand what you need, how my life is affecting you, and _____.
- ❖ I am committed to _____ and _____ our connection. I will do what I need to do in order to keep moving _____ – no matter what.
- ❖ It is _____ to manage my heart so that I can _____ to you in love and _____ in our relationship.

Add **PK** to freshen up your marriage!



P.....

K.....

Connection Exercise: (reflective listening with “I” message)

**“I feel (*emotion*) when (*describe experience*)
and I need to feel (*emotion*).”**

1. I feel loved and cared about when . . .
2. I used to feel loved and cared about when . . .
3. I would love it if . . .
4. Take turns sharing with each other. Then indicate how important each caring behaviour is to you by writing a number from 1-5 beside each one (1 important - 5 not so important)
5. Choose 2 or 3 items from your partner’s list that you are willing to do each day for the next two months. (Start with the easiest ones for you to do at this stage.)

NB these caring behaviours are gifts, not obligations. Do them regardless of how you feel about your partner, and regardless of the number of caring behaviours your partner gives you.

IDENTIFY YOUR 'BUTTONS' IN CONFLICT:

- Identify a recent conflict, argument, or negative situation with your spouse that really pushed your buttons in some way.
- Think about how you were feeling and what they said or did. What was it they did that bothered you? How did you react? Who was around you? What was the environment like?
- You might have even thought "If only you would stop saying or doing _____, I would not be so upset."

❖ **IDENTIFY YOUR FEELINGS.** How did this conflict or negative situation make you feel? How did it hurt you? **You can't change what you don't name!** Once you can identify why you get upset then you can start changing the way you respond when your "buttons" get pushed.

Abandonment
Humiliation
Judgment
Mistrust
Powerlessness
Unhappiness
Danger
Feeling disliked
Failure
Despair

Feeling unimportant
Inferiority
Loneliness
Neglect
Rejection
Worthlessness
Disappointment
Feeling Ignored
Feeling defective

Feeling unwanted
Ashamed
Being misunderstood
Being invalidated
Being scorned
Condemnation
Feeling devalued
Disconnection
Unappreciated

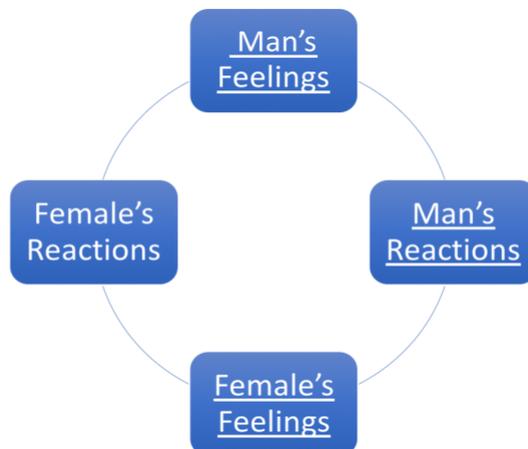
❖ **IDENTIFY YOUR REACTIONS:** What do you do when you feel _____?
Here are some examples:

Minimize/maximize
Humour/sarcasm
Rationalization
Complaining
Anger

Negative
Indifference
Aggression or abuse
Exaggeration
Denial

Numbing your emotions
Manipulation
Blaming
Defensiveness
Shutdown

Fill in your reactions on your Conflict Cycle Chart.



Rules for Conflict:

It is not how well you love each other
But how well you disagree!

Don't go to sleep angry – Eph 4:26

No unwholesome talk - Eph 2:29

Soft words essential- Prov 15:1

Nothing physical - Never!!

We will never mention Divorce, (it is not an option!)

We will not bring up old, unrelated items from the past.

We will never 'fight' in public. or in front of our children.

When we need 'space' to think, we will ask for time out for 10 mins.

Failure is not an option, whatever it takes we will work it out!

We will not bring up potential delicate topics on dates, holidays or the start of the weekends.

We will value, respect and appreciate each other's differences (to understand/ and not try and change)

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 *Love fights fair* 

APOLOGY

WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO APOLOGIZE IN ORDER TO REBUILD TRUST, AND REBUILDING TRUST IS CRUCIAL TO RECONCILIATION.

DISAGREEMENTS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN, so let's get good at apologizing!

AN APOLOGY IS A COMMITMENT TO THE RELATIONSHIP IT IS NOT AN ACT OF WEAKNESS. It says, "You are extremely valuable to me, and I am committed to repairing the damage that I have done to you."

FOUR PARTS OF AN EFFECTIVE APOLOGY

1. **I'm sorry** (take responsibility): Our natural tendency is to get defensive and "explain ourselves" so we don't have to accept the fact that we made a mistake. Practise it so you don't get defensive.

Avoid **if** or **but**. This makes it sound like you don't **really** think you did anything wrong.

* Give an example of an apology using if or but. Now remove the word and try it.

(*"I'm sorry for the hurtful things I said **but** I was having a bad day."* *"John, I'm sorry **if** what I said was hurtful."*)

2. **I was wrong.** (Acknowledge their pain):

- Don't wait until both sides try to prove their point before saying you're sorry.
- We don't need to make changes **only** if we have been proven to be wrong. We apologize because the other person feels hurt! If I am COMMITTED TO THE RELATIONSHIP, AND NOT BEING RIGHT, it does no good to prove that I didn't really do anything wrong, or tell them that they "shouldn't feel that way".

Ex: *"I can see that you are very upset about this. I can understand that when I didn't consult you it made you feel disrespected and like you're not an important part of my decision-making process."*

- Ask them, "How can I repair this with you?"

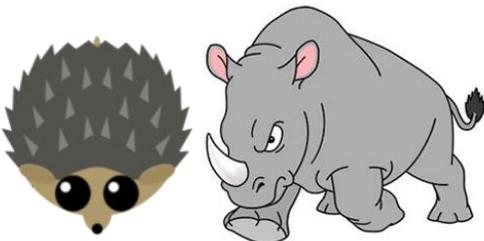
- Give them time to respond. Just because you want to feel better, don't try to rush things along. Allow time. We are giving them the opportunity to get rid of pain and bitterness!

3. **Will you/please forgive me?** .

- Admit specifically: This helps convince the other person that I'm sincerely facing up to my wrong and rebuilds trust. It also forces me to identify the area I need to work on.
- "I am sorry for _____. Will you forgive me?" "Yes, I forgive you." (not, "It's ok" or "that doesn't matter.")

This tells the person that restoring the relationship is important to you. It is a position of humility as we make ourselves vulnerable and request something that this person has the power to give. It also invites a response from the other person.

4. **How do I need to change?** This is the stretch of growth to meet their needs.



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'LUV Talk'- A Conflict Resolution Tool

– Drive-thru Communication

Drive Thru chains like McDonalds, have studied effective communication to stay 'married' to their customers and not get divorced by them!

Use when starting to get infected by Relational Germs:

- **L** _____
- **U** _____
- **V** _____

Welcome to Restaurant, can I take your order please!

1. (Share only feelings in short sentences.) ***"I feel..... when this happens....."***

2. (Putting yourself in a non-defensive mode) Repeat back only what they have heard and understood. ***"So what I heard you say is that you feel..... Is that correct?"***

1. (If correct continue with another feeling or go onto what your needs are.) ***" I need so that I can feel"***

2. (Repeat back only what they have heard and understood.) ***"What I am hearing you say is that you need me to..... so that you can feel"***

1. Continue until finished then switch places and discuss your feelings and needs on **THIS TOPIC ONLY.**

Blend - Discuss all options that could make a win/win solution

Notes: 5 PHASE CONFLICT ACTION PLAN!

1. Problem:

2. Emotion:

3. Discussion:

4. Outcome:

5. Feedback:

5 PHASE CONFLICT ACTION PLAN!

Peaceful

Crazy cycle

Problem

Emotion

Discussion

Outcome

Feedback

Contempt, anger, stone walling
Criticism, defensiveness.
Need rules for conflict/ control
TAKE TIME OUT
APOLOGY

LUV talk

Win/win, enthusiastic
agreement, commit
happily, enjoy journey



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