



Crafting an Invitation to Engage

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Crafting an Invitation for Engagement

Pursuing only perpetuates the distance, mistrust and frustration in the marriage. Once the pursuing eases, other avenues of connecting become more possible.

Instead of pursuing, I suggest, if you are ready for engagement to craft an invitation that will invite your spouse to engage you.

You are gently opening the door and inviting your spouse or partner to join with you. No demands. No threats. Not guilt. No manipulation.

If you believe a positive point of engagement between you exists, I present the first invitation for him/her to join you in completing an exercise.

If there is a minimal level of engagement at this point, suggest to your spouse that s/he may want to read and complete the exercise in Part IV of this Module: How to Manage the Distancing?.

Read his/her response to the exercise and then proceed to offer an invitation to engage.

Invite him/her to participate using words similar to:

Use words similar to:

"I've been thinking a great deal lately about you and I, but especially me. I feel like I've been holding a hammer over your head, or nagging (fill in the blank _____) and I don't like myself when I do that.

I've been placing too much emphasis on what you do or don't do.

I want to understand you better. But, more than that, I want to accept you and love you for who you are. I'm weary of trying to change you, when I don't need to do that in the first place.

I've been examining why it is that I need to pursue you. I've been using a checklist I picked up to help me understand me.

I have a checklist for you as well. It's helped me to feel better about you and what my pursuing might be like for you.

I'm going to leave it on the counter. If you would like, you can pick it up at any time. This



is an invitation. I'm saying good-bye to my pursuing part. ☺

Of course, feel free to change the wording if you so desire. I want you to get a feel for the type of approach that stands the best chance, for most, of being received positively.

If your spouse picks up the exercise or completes it, wait for his/her response.

At this point, DO NOT ask any questions or probe.

Got it!?

Comments from those who found this exercise helpful:

I found that after using these insights, I was better able to be around my spouse without negative thoughts.

I totally related to these reasons why I pursue. I think I do it to gain control over my fears. By me doing the pursuing, my H doesn't get a chance to tell me how HE feels about me/us. I end up short circuiting the process of letting him seek me out. I used this information and it has helped me stop to an extent. I realize at least, why I do it now.

I recognized several things that might apply to our situation, the feeling that she cant compete verbally, guilt, me reminding her of a bad part of her life etc. I realize that I have to quit forcing the issue and quit expecting things from her or coming off as demanding. Finding the balance between loving without judgment and putting the anger and pain behind for what she did is paramount I feel. It's a work in progress, but accepting that she is doing her best too I believe will help me with those things. Finding the way to let go of the anxiety of how things will turn out seems to be the toughest part.

I think the power of this for me was the reminder that I need to look inward and heal myself, give love to myself rather than pull on my partner to supply that love. I cant change him by talking it through with him. I do like to talk as it creates a sense of connectedness for me but for him it feels like demands for action. I sometimes forget, in my neediness to connect with him, that I can't make him do something just by telling him I want him to do something.