

**Readiness for Engagement
7 Negative Indicators**

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7 Indicators that You are Not Ready to Engage (in a constructive way)

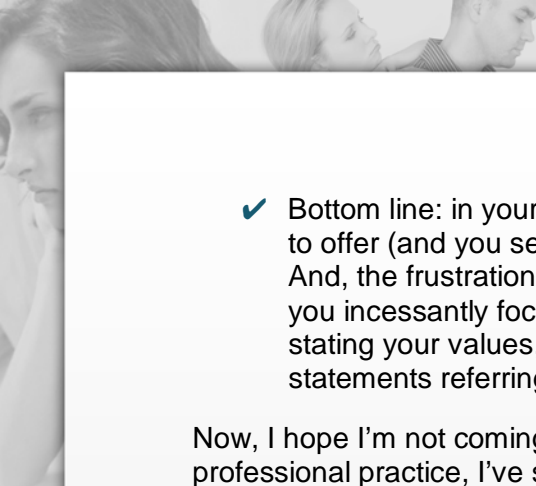
You may not be ready or lack the capacity to generate a conversation that generates understanding and resolution. The previous exercise hopefully was helpful in giving insight as to your readiness to communicate.

This is most evident when the relationship is under crisis. During crisis you tend to revert to old patterns that no longer work or get the opposite of what you truly want.

The old adage: you shoot yourself in the foot.

You probably would benefit from more self awareness and personal growth If one or more of these situations apply to you:

- ✓ When your life is threatened, by divorce, by infidelity or some other crisis, it is easy to revert to being a basket case. You feel as if you are tearing apart at the seams. You lose your sensibility and it becomes exceedingly difficult to remain internal calm. Your spouse most likely does not want to deal or be in the presence of a basket case. It stirs within him/her those triggers that lead to him/her to being a basket case. This often is not very pretty.
- ✓ You talk in circles. You bump into your marital impasse, or that point at which effective communication breaks down. You know you've been there; done that. You can predict how s/he will respond to your response, how you will respond to that response and how you will respond to the response of the response. And, on top of that, it seems exceedingly difficult, if not well neigh impossible to stop that cycle.
- ✓ You can't see the forest for the trees. Your focus is exceedingly narrow. You focus on the hurt, the pain, what is not working and what you are not getting. It is impossible for you to stand back and see the larger picture. And, when you can't see the larger picture, you run out of ways to resolve your feelings and the issue at hand. You are mired in the devastation.
- ✓ Your world of intimacy and connection is too small. Your expectations are not in line with the reality of a gentle and powerful loving relationship. You've read too many romance novels, watched too many romance-comedies, watched the "Bachelor" for too long and are clueless about the demands and reality of a truly deep, loving marriage and relationship. As a result, your feelings of inadequacy are tweaked which puts you on a path of hurt and frustration.
- ✓ You are not aware of what s/he says or does or does not say or do that serves as a trigger for your pain and frustration. Because your focus is narrow you fail to stand back and gain an awareness of what is happening in the moment. You lose your control and feel powerless to address the intricacies of the relationship or marriage at hand.
- ✓ You talk in generalities. You throw around words such as love, intimacy, being a friend, listening, caring, lying, affection and trust without examining the underlying meaning a word may have for each of you. When you say love, you have images, feelings and specific behaviors in mind. Your spouse or partner may have very different images, feelings and behaviors in mind. You are like two ships sailing past each other, yet using the same words.

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- ✓ Bottom line: in your
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 And, the frustration
 you incessantly foc
 stating your values,
 statements referring
- Now, I hope I'm not coming
 professional practice, I've s

When life throws us a lemon, we don't always make lemonade. We often become sour!

If you can do that, there is a greater possibility of you being ready to embrace this love and trust building process.

Which of the above distinctions speaks most powerfully about engaging your spouse or partner?

Begin to make the mental shifts that will place you on a more productive and effective path to marriage and love construction or reconstruction.

Take a couple moments to place a checkmark in the box that most closely fit where you are now relative to the two opposing beliefs.

Destructive Belief	Check what you believe now	Constructive Belief
<p>I must focus on what s/he is doing or not doing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>		<p>I focus on my well being and personal power</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

S/he drives me crazy.	I remain calm in spite of the upset.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I must know what s/he is thinking.	I want to clearly state my position.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We must talk through our problems.	I want to engage him/her.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S/he must meet my needs,	I know exactly what I need.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S/he should know me.	No one can read my mind.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you want to take this a little further:

List other shifts you would like to make:

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Engage Self

I do not want you at this point to share your findings and thoughts with your spouse or partner.

You engage you. Don't engage the other.

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be significant. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

Reflect on and Answer these questions:

I will be most aware of these new distinctions and/or shifts at this time and place during the next day.

I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.

How did I enhance my personal power and/or voice?

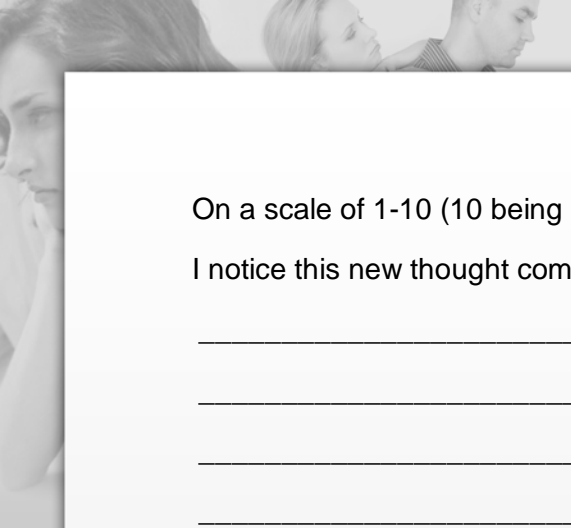
Reflect on and Answer these Questions:

Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.

Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.

Remember, you are just beginning. Don't be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.

These questions will help you evaluate your experience:



On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as _____.

I notice this new thought coming to mind after I engage myself:

I notice this new image coming to mind after spending time reflecting:

I notice this feeling _____ located in this part of my body
_____ emerging after I reflect.

I now think this of myself after engaging myself.
