

Table 10.1 - Time Travelling Back to a Triggering Moment

Re-experience the moments leading up to the trigger. Picture yourself back in the moments just before you first felt triggered (upset or frustrated with your partner). Go over the events in detail mentally. Put yourself back in the situation as if it is happening for the first time.

The trigger. Picture the specific words your partner said or the things that she did that triggered the negative reaction in you.

Do-over. Practice reacting differently this time.

1. Say to yourself things that will help you avoid jumping to negative conclusions, such as...

“There might be more to the story.”

- “Things might not be as clear cut as they seem.”
- “Maybe they are; maybe they aren’t.”

“I can afford to take my time.”

- “There’s no rush.” “The sky isn’t falling.”
- “This doesn’t have to be that big of a deal.”
- “I don’t like the way she is acting and I’m going to need to say something about it, but I need to relax and let things unfold first.”

“I need to relax.”

- “Right now, calming down is more important than anything else.
- “I need to feel less frustrated before I do or say anything.”

“Just because I try to understand doesn’t mean that I have to go along with it.”

- “If I want her to understand my perspective, I need to understand hers, too.”

2. Relax, slow your breathing, and temporarily let go of the urge to counter or criticize.

3. Look for and acknowledge understandable things or let her know you’re trying to understand.