

Table 2.1	
Habits of People Who Know How to Get Their Partners to Treat Them Well	
Disagreement-Related Habits	
1.	Avoid Erroneous Fault-Finding
2.	Find the Understandable Part
3.	Identify Underlying Needs, Values and Worries
4.	Offer Assurance
5.	Give and Ask for Equal Regard
6.	Stand Up for Yourself Without Making a Big Deal About The Fact That You Had To
a.	Ask and Offer
b.	Broaden the Scope
c.	Temporarily Distance Yourself
d.	Don't Make a Big Deal of It
e.	Try Again Later
f.	If Needed, Refuse to Continue Business as Usual
Friendship Habits	
7.	Curiosity About Your Partner's World
8.	Noticing and Acknowledging the Positive
9.	Pursuing Shared Meaning
10.	Making and Responding to Bids for Connection

Table 3.1: Summary of Core Differences

<p>1</p> <p>Independence vs. Togetherness</p>	<p>Independence-First</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often prefer to engage in activities and tasks independently Each partner mostly assumes responsibility for meeting their own needs and completing their own tasks. Rather than assuming responsibility for anticipating each other's needs, each partner expects the other to speak up when they need something. <p>Dream: Not having to worry about inadvertently hurting someone by one's inattentiveness. Not being responsible for someone else's happiness.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: I'll spend my whole life meeting my partner's needs, and I'll be neglected.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You want me to read your mind! You expect too much! You want me to do things for you that you're perfectly capable of doing for yourself! You're too needy!</p>	<p>Togetherness-First</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often prefer to engage in activities and tasks together Each partner counts on help from the other in completing tasks or shouldering burdens. Each partner anticipates the needs of the other, and attempts to meet them without having to be asked. <p>Dream: That my partner would take my feelings into consideration without my demanding it. A feeling of companionship. Never having to be alone.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: I'll feel like I'm in this world alone. There will be nobody looking out for me but myself. I've got no backup. I'm on my own.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You live in your own little world! You're self-centered (or selfish)! Anyone in her right mind would have realized that I needed help. I shouldn't have had to ask!</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Present vs. Future Orientation</p>	<p>Invest-in-the-Future-First</p> <p>Delay gratification. Work first, then play.</p> <p>Dream: To share a secure future together.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: If we goof around along the way, we may invest inadequately in our future happiness.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're lazy! You're irresponsible! You're like a child who has to have everything right now!</p>	<p>Live-for- the-Moment-First</p> <p>Invest in the future, but not at the expense of enjoying the present.</p> <p>Dream: To have a life where you enjoy each moment.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: Life will be a continual chore. What's the point, if you don't enjoy it along the way? There will always be more work... enjoyment will fade.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're anal, neurotic, anxious, etc.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Degree of Structure</p>	<p>Predictability-First</p> <p>Seek security, predictability and order first, and then can experiment within the safe parameters.</p> <p>Dream: To have a safety net so that life feels more stable, less anxiety-provoking.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: If you don't plan it, it might not happen. Life will be out of control.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're reckless!</p>	<p>Spontaneity-First</p> <p>Seek adventure, creativity, open-endedness first; the rest will fall into place. Be more structured only if a more spontaneous approach fails.</p> <p>Dream: To avoid boredom. Life as an adventure!</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: Slowly dying of boredom. Life will be dull and meaningless.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're boring! You're a coward!</p>
<p>4</p> <p>First Reaction to Things You Don't Like</p>	<p>Slow-to-Upset</p> <p>Getting upset doesn't help anything. Don't make a big deal of things. It's not the end of the world if everything doesn't go the way you wanted it to.</p> <p>Dream: To have a partner who doesn't freak out when I fail to meet her expectations.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: That life will become a never-ending series of things to be upset about.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You are never satisfied! You're a negative person. You're not happy unless you have something to be upset about!</p>	<p>Readily-Upset</p> <p>It's normal to feel upset when something seems wrong, deficient or less than it should be. If nobody gets upset, nothing ever changes.</p> <p>Dream: To have a partner who understands that there's nothing wrong with getting upset if something bothers you.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: That I'll go through life stifling my feelings.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're a fake. Underneath it all, you get just as upset as I do. You're just afraid of a little conflict! You're a wimp!</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Resolving Upset Feelings</p>	<p>Problem-Solving-First</p> <p>Feel better by doing something about the upsetting situation. Solve the problem or make a plan and you'll feel better.</p> <p>Dream: To have a partner who lets bygones be bygones—who has a positive attitude toward life.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: I don't want to "fuel the fire" by giving her negative feelings too much attention.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You're a hopelessly negative person, a whiner, a victim. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and get over it. Either do something about it or get over it!</p>	<p>Understanding-First</p> <p>Feel better by feeling understood.</p> <p>Dream: For someone to understand what its like to be me. To avoid loneliness.</p> <p>Fear of Accepting Influence: If you let go of upset feelings before feeling understood, you will never feel understood. You'll just fix things on the surface.</p> <p>Critical Stance: You couldn't care less about how I feel! You just want to pretend the whole thing never happened!</p>

Table 5.1: The Relationship Offenses

Disagreement-Related Offenses

1. Concluding that one's partner is wrong when s/he isn't
2. Defensiveness
3. Dismissiveness
4. Jumping to negative conclusions; Failing to give the benefit of the doubt.
5. Calling one's partner names or putting one's partner down
6. Unwillingness to compromise
7. Acting "High and Mighty"
8. Withdrawing prematurely
9. Excusing oneself from the responsibility of standing up for oneself, and instead blaming one's partner for being controlling.

It's wrong for people to act in these ways during disagreements, but if they have done so over time, chances are very high that their partners have done just as many of these things. Attempts of one partner to point out the other's faults will likely fail unless he or she is also making just as big a deal of his or her own faults. People who are successful in getting their partners to commit fewer of these offenses do it by reducing the frequency of their own offenses.

Obvious Offenses

- When people ...
- are physically aggressive
 - intentionally lie or deceive their partners
 - are sexually unfaithful
 - fail to keep clear-cut agreements without good reason
 - badmouth or undermine their partners
 - violate their partners' privacy or personal space
 - make irreversible, unilateral decisions regarding things about which they know their partners have strong feelings.

These actions are clearly wrong, and the "meet in the middle" rule doesn't apply. Effective people ask their partners to stop, and if their partners don't, they refuse to continue business as usual until their partners do. However, the odds that their partners will indeed stop and feel remorse are directly related to the attitude people have as they refuse to continue business as usual. People who are effective at "getting through" to their partners draw lines when they need to, but in their heads, they avoid making a big deal of how awful their partners are for doing things that require them to draw the line.

The Offense of Misplaced Overall Blame

- When people consistently distort the degree of their own misbehavior relative to the degree and amount of their partners' to the point where they believe that...
- ...their partners are mostly to blame for their relationship problems
- ...overall, they have better relationship habits than their partners do...

This offense is more serious than most people realize, and is the single most potent predictor of relationship dissolution found to date. If people continue to believe that their partners are the main villains, when in reality their own contributions have been just as destructive as their partners', their relationships usually end. When they are globally blamed by their partners, skillful people acknowledge that there is a degree of truth in their partners' claims that they have behaved badly at times. Then, they calmly state their beliefs that their partners have behaved just as badly as they have. They are prepared to give specific examples of their partners' destructive actions, while continuing to acknowledge the destructiveness of their own.

Non-Offenses (Often mistakenly believed to be offenses)

- When people mistakenly believe their partners are...
- selfish
 - irresponsible
 - inattentive
 - insensitive
 - immature
 - misguided
 - unrealistic
 - irrational
 - short-sighted
 - biased
 - lazy
 - inconsiderate
 - self-absorbed
 - unrealistic
 - unfeeling or uncaring
 - too needy
 - too controlling
 - negative
 - over-reactive

Studies indicate that, most often when people believe that their partners' conduct fits these descriptors, there isn't anything wrong with their partners' priorities, preferences or opinions. Because your priorities at the moment seem so obvious and logical to you, it's easy to assume that her priorities are out of line, if they don't match up. If you make this mistake regularly, you'll dramatically lower the odds that you'll receive the kind of love and respect from her that you'd like to have.

Table 6.2: Disagreement-Related Offenses

1. **Erroneous Fault-Finding.** You believe that your partner's opinions, actions or priorities are selfish, inappropriate, irresponsible, misguided, immature or out-of-line when they're really not (i.e., they are legitimately different than yours). You have difficulty realizing that there are many different ways of making sense of things and of navigating life that can work in relationships and that just because your priorities, opinions or actions clearly seem better to you doesn't mean they really are.
2. **Defensiveness.** When your partner is upset with you, you focus exclusively on defending or justifying your actions or opinions, neglecting to acknowledge the legitimate want or need that is driving her complaint. You may object so strongly to her attitude or delivery that you close yourself off to the content of what she is saying. In other words, you "throw out the baby with the bathwater." Understandably, you don't like her attitude or delivery (which may seem harsh or closed-minded), but you make the mistake of discrediting her perspective altogether. You tend to believe that you don't need to make any changes or adjustments in your behavior as long as you're not doing anything wrong.
3. **Jumping to Negative Conclusions; Failing to Give Your Partner the Benefit of the Doubt.** You jump to the conclusion that her behavior is due to selfishness, immaturity, or some other bad personality trait rather than assuming that there is an understandable explanation for her behavior -- and looking for it.
4. **Dismissiveness.** When your partner explains her perspective, you focus solely on disputing her perceptions or shooting holes in her argument, failing to acknowledge anything reasonable or legitimate about her viewpoint. When her perceptions or interpretations seem exaggerated or extreme, you tend to dismiss them altogether, rather than looking for a less extreme version that could be valid. You have a tendency to believe that her wants, needs, or expectations are unreasonable, excessive or short-sighted when they're actually legitimate—just different than yours.
5. **Putting Your Partner Down.** You call her derogatory names, put her down, or you avoid saying derogatory things but talk to her with the same attitude or tone that you would have if you were actually saying the words.
6. **Unwillingness to Compromise.** You are unwilling to "meet your partner in the middle" or give her preferences or priorities equal regard unless they make sense to you.
7. **Acting "High and Mighty."** When your partner makes mistakes or does things that are wrong, you make a big deal of it. You think badly of her and act like she's committed a stupid act or unforgivable crime. You fail to look for the understandable reasons that might be driving her actions. You act like you have never done anything as bad as what she has done.
8. **Shutting Down, Walking Away Prematurely, or Unwillingness to Talk About an Issue.** You break off communication prematurely without first communicating openness and willingness to consider the merit of your partner's viewpoint while also asking her for the same.
9. **Failing to Stand Up for Yourself and Instead Blaming Your Partner for Being Selfish or Controlling.** You excuse yourself from the responsibility of standing up for yourself; instead, you blame her for being selfish or controlling. You let her have her way, and then you think less of her for it. You are unwilling or unable to "rock the boat" by requiring that she give your viewpoints and preferences equal regard. On the occasions when you try standing up for yourself, you have difficulty doing it without committing one or more of the other offenses in the process.

Table 8.1: Audio-Guided Assistance¹

Recording 1 - Introduction

Listen to this recording first. It explains the purpose of each of the other recordings and suggests how you can get the most benefit from listening to them.

Recording 2 –When You Feel Freshly Upset with Your Partner

People often make the mistake of trying to talk to their partners when they are freshly upset, yet these are the moments when they are least likely to be effective. The guidelines in this recording will help you avoid some of the typical mistakes that people often make in the initial moments when they feel frustrated or upset with their partners. This recording will help you get into a frame of mind where you can talk productively with your partner.

Recording 3- Getting Your Partner to Care that Something Bothers You

The guidelines in this recording are for situations where you are the first one who feels frustrated or upset. Your partner isn't (or probably won't be) frustrated or upset until she realizes that you are frustrated or upset with her. This recording will help you mentally rehearse the skills that are used by people who are good at getting their partners to be responsive to their complaints and dissatisfactions.

Recording 3.5- When Your Partner's Behavior Seems Wrong

Listen to this recording in situations where you're having a hard time seeing your partner's behavior as anything other than *just plain wrong!*

Recording 4 – When Your Partner is Upset with You

The guidelines in this recording are for situations where your partner is the one who expresses frustration or disapproval first. You are not (or probably won't be) frustrated or upset until she expresses frustration with or disapproval of you. This recording will help you mentally rehearse the skills that are used by people who are good at getting their partners to be less accusatory and more open to their perspectives.

Recording 5 – Getting on the Same Page With Your Expectations.

This recording will help you mentally rehearse the skills needed in order to have discussions that enable you and your partner to get on the same page in areas where you tend to disagree or want different things.

Recording 6 – When Being Open and Flexible Isn't Enough

The skills in this recording are for situations where, in spite of you clearly communicating openness and flexibility, your partner remains closed and inflexible. She makes no attempt to understand your viewpoint even though you've taken time to try and understand the logic of her feelings. You've already used the skills described in recordings 2-5, but your partner has not been using the skills. Using this recording, you will mentally rehearse the *standing up* skills that are characteristic of people who know how to get their partners to treat them well.

Recording 7 – If Your Partner Criticizes You Harshly or Puts You Down

Sometimes partners go beyond criticizing and they start putting their mates down, calling them derogatory names, hitting below the belt, taking cheap shots, communicating a condescending attitude or a tone of disgust. This recording will help you mentally rehearse the skills you can use to get your partner to become more respectful if she does one of these things.

¹ A written summary of each recording can be found in Appendix I.

Table 8.2 – The Recalibration Protocol

- 1. Suspend your negative judgments.** Don't buy into the feeling you may be having right now that your partner is the worst person in the world or that her behavior is inexcusably _____ (selfish, insensitive, clueless, irresponsible, inconsiderate, controlling, etc.)
Try saying something to yourself like:
 - "Maybe things are as bad as they seem, but maybe they aren't. There might be more to the story."
 - "I'm probably not in a good place to be objective about things right now."
- 2. Do what it takes to get to a place inside where you feel calmer and less frustrated.**
 - Remind yourself that even if things are as bad as they seem – it's not the end of the world. You'll figure out how to be okay.
 - Deliberately decide to stop trying to analyze the situation until you can get to a place inside where you feel calmer and less annoyed with your partner.
 - Relax your body, slow your breathing, and focus on something else for a while. Engage in an activity that requires your full attention. Focus on any mental thoughts or images that help you feel more at ease.
- 3. Once you are feeling calmer, remember that it is totally in your own best interest to find and acknowledge understandable things about your partner's perspective– even if you can't agree with the way she's acting.**
Remind yourself:
 - "I will have more credibility and influence if I can set my reactions aside for the moment and try to find and acknowledge understandable things about your partner's perspective."
 - "Just because I acknowledge understandable things about her perspective doesn't mean that I need to agree with it or go along with it."
 - "If I want her to understand my perspective, I need to understand hers, too."
- 4. Now look for understandable things.** Could one of the following possibilities apply here?
 - Maybe your partner is operating on different information or assumptions than I am.
 - Maybe she doesn't mean what her words or actions seem to be saying.
 - Maybe she's reading things into my words or actions that I don't mean to be saying.
 - Maybe this is one of those frustrating-but-inevitable situations where we have legitimately different priorities or expectations, and neither of us is necessarily right or wrong.
 - Maybe there are things going on outside the present situation that are affecting how your partner is acting here.
- 5. With just the information you have right now...**
 - What is something that could be at least partly understandable about her perspective?
 - What underlying want or need might she have that could be as legitimate as your own?
- 6. In an upcoming conversation, what words can you use...**
 - to convey open-mindedness and genuine interest in understanding her perspective, or
 - to acknowledge understandable or valid things about her wants, needs or perspective?
- 7. Think about compromise in advance.** Assume for the moment that even if you have a respectful discussion with your partner, you may still not be on the same page with your wants, needs, or expectations. What is one possible suggestion you could make that would be an attempt to give equal weight to both of your perspectives?

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.

Table 10.2 Recording Your Complaints

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a way for your partner to practice reacting more constructively at moments when you try to express your feelings. For this exercise, you need either a smart phone equipped with a voice recorder or a free-standing digital sound recorder. In the days ahead, whenever you feel dissatisfied with your partner's behavior, start the voice recorder and speak as if you were leaving a voice mail message for your partner. Address the issue as you typically would. Some people express dissatisfaction head-on (e.g., "It really bugs me that you forgot to tell me you talked to my mother"), while others express dissatisfaction more by asking questions (e.g., "Were you going to tell me that you talked to my mother?") Communicate your feelings the way you typically do. Keep each recording relatively short (from 15-45 seconds). Any time you feel even mildly dissatisfied with your partner, make a recording. After you've made each recording, simply email it to your partner.

These recordings can be a tremendous resource your partner can use to develop the ability to react better when you bring up a question or complaint in real life. While listening to your recordings, if your partner is like most people, your partner will feel the same kind of defensive or dismissive internal reactions that s/he typically does in real life. However, unlike in real life, without you actually being there in front of him/her your partner won't feel the pressure of responding to you immediately and will be more able to focus on his or her reactions. Your partner will have the luxury of becoming more aware of his/her knee-jerk reactions, and then develop a plan for how s/he can better react. Finally, your partner will use the recordings to practice new reactions while feeling at least mildly upset or frustrated by your recordings, and s/he'll do this over and over again until the new ways of reacting become more of a habit.

Table 10.3 Taking the Edge Off¹

Notice moments when you feel stressed, upset, annoyed, disappointed, frustrated, or bothered in some way during the course of your day. When you notice one of these feelings, stop what you're doing for 60 seconds and engage in the 3-step sequence described below. Practice with every frustration or upset feeling that you experience on a daily basis -- no matter how small, and no matter what triggered your upset feeling. Most of the work involves simply remembering to interrupt whatever you're doing for a few moments and do the exercise. Here are the steps:

Step 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 the other person to understand my perspective, I need to understand his/hers, too."

Step 2: Relax, slow your breathing, and temporarily let go of the urge to say or do anything.

- Let go of the urge to say or do something right away. Tell yourself, "There's no rush. "I'll figure out what to do. I can afford to take my time."
- Let go of tension in all parts of your body and become physically "loose" all over. Take a big inhale and then let go of your breath with a long, slow-release exhale.

Step 3: Look for Understandable Things.

- Come up with at least one possible explanation for the present situation that doesn't cast yourself or others in a negative light.

¹ Notice that the steps in this table are similar to those in Table 10.1 (page 110), modified slightly to be more generally applicable.

Table 11.1
Emotionally Supportive Conversations: Guidelines for Speaking

Talk about things that made you feel good and bad during the day (Rather than just recounting the events of your day).

Talk about what it was like to be you. Don't just give details about the situations that made you feel good or bad— talk about what it was like to be you in the situations.

Even mildly frustrating situations are worth talking about. If you are the kind of person who doesn't like to make a big deal about your feelings, you might have to really think hard to remember times when you recently felt bad. If there were no situations that produced strong feelings, focus on small changes in your emotional state. It's rare to have a perfectly "flat-line" day when it comes to your emotions. There are usually little ups and downs. Try to remember these.

Take your time. As you are talking, take the time to think about how you felt (or are feeling). Sometimes, you might need to stop for a few moments and "sense" how you feel about the whole thing. Otherwise, you'll end up just describing the details of what happened rather than what it was like for you inside. Often the specific quality of feelings or the reasons why we feel certain things only become clear when we ponder them for a few moments.

Describe any vulnerable feelings you had, even if you only felt them mildly. (see the list below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed	<input type="checkbox"/> Unlovable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confused
<input type="checkbox"/> Insecure	<input type="checkbox"/> Lonely	<input type="checkbox"/> Betrayed
<input type="checkbox"/> Powerless	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
<input type="checkbox"/> Helpless	<input type="checkbox"/> Guilty	<input type="checkbox"/> Unimportant
<input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid	<input type="checkbox"/> Incompetent
<input type="checkbox"/> Unappreciated	<input type="checkbox"/> Worried	

Come up for air! Pause every once in a while to give your partner a chance to react to what you are saying.

If you want advice, say so. Otherwise, remind your partner that you just want him/her to listen and try to understand your feelings.

Table 11.2
Emotionally Supportive Conversations: Guidelines for Listening

Attempts to cheer up one's partner often backfire, because the partner who is feeling bad interprets the "cheering" attempts of his or her partner to be evidence that the "cheering" partner is uncomfortable with the "feeling bad" partner's feelings and wants the "feeling bad" partner to "get over it." Well-intended comments like...

- "Don't let it get you down"
- "I'm sure everything is going to work out"
- "Maybe she didn't mean to hurt you."
- "Things aren't as bad as they seem." "
- "Let's figure out what to do about this problem!"

are often heard as...

- "I can't handle you being so upset!"
- "I don't want to understand how you are feeling; I just want you to stop feeling this way."
- "Would you stop being so sensitive? "You're over-reacting!"
- "You shouldn't feel that way!"
- "Enough said....now let's move on!" or "I'd rather help you change the way you feel than really understand how you are feeling."

Avoid trying to make your partner feel better until you have spent time helping him/her feel understood. It's not that advice or "focusing on the positive" comments are never helpful. It's a matter of timing. First help your partner feel understood, then explore different avenues for dealing with the problem situation, *but only if your partner asks for it*. Actually, you may find that your help in advice-giving or problem-solving isn't even necessary, because if your partner feels understood and supported, s/he may automatically feel better and know what to do. Feeling understood is often the most critical factor in feeling better. So, when you sense that your partner is feeling bad, try beginning with the following:

- Ask yourself: "Can I be comfortable allowing my partner to feel bad for a few minutes while I keep him/her company?"
- Slow down. Communicate that you have time to listen.
- Avoid giving your reactions to what your partner is saying.
- Avoid giving advice.

When your partner begins to talk...

Ask for more details. (The goal is for your partner to go away from the conversation feeling that you understand exactly what it was like for him/her, and to feel your support.)

- "What about the situation was the most upsetting to you?"
- "What was that like for you? What were you thinking? How did you feel?"

- “What was the worst about it?”
- “How long did you feel upset?” “Are you still upset?”
- “What did you do?”
- “What did you feel like doing?”
- “Why do you think that happened?”

Give Sympathy: “I’m sorry you had a hard day.” “I think you’ve had a harder day than me... How about if you just try to relax for a while I take care of the kids.” “I don’t like it when people treat you that way.”

Give emotional support: I’m on your side. We’re in this together. I’ll help you if you want me to.

Be affectionate: “Why don’t you come over here and let me rub your shoulders for a few minutes?” “Here, you put your feet up while I get you something to drink.” “Here, let me hold you for a minute.”

Table 12.1 - What Makes You Feel Loved?

In the center (bolded) column, please rate how important each item is to you, on a scale of 1-5 (1=not very important, 5=really important). Then, please put check marks in any of the five columns to the right (A, B, C, D, or E) that describe your feelings.

During periods of time when we're getting along well, I feel loved when (with a good attitude) my partner...		Rate how important this is to you (1-5)	I'd like to have less of this	Its not that big of a deal to me	I'm satisfied with the amount I get	More would be nice	I'd love to have more!
1	...gives her undivided attention for periods of time.						
2	...works together with me to accomplish tasks that need to be done.						
3	...fixes (or gets) food for me.						
4	...encourages me to take personal time to do things I like to do.						
5	...joins me in outdoor activities.						
6	...arranges a date for us.						
7	...gets interested in things I'm interested in.						
8	...is physically affectionate with me in a nonsexual way.						
9	...gets turned on by me sexually.						
10	...listens and cares when I'm stressed about things in my life.						
11	...wants to go to new places, have new adventures or experiences with me.						
12	...makes me feel like we're in this together.						
13	...thinks about me when we're apart						
14	...stops what she's doing for a moment and greets me warmly when one of us comes home.						
15	...gives me compliments on my appearance or performance						
16	...helps me accomplish my tasks.						
17	...gives thought to the things that need to be done for the household to run smoothly.						
18	...is physically affectionate with me in front of other people.						
19	...gives me compliments or talks positively about me in front of other people						
20	...reciprocates when I'm affectionate.						
21	...gives me massages						
22	...teases me in a good-natured way						
23	...knows what's going on in my life						

During periods of time when we're getting along well, I feel loved when (with a good attitude) my partner...		Rate how important this is to you (1-5)	I'd like to have less of this	Its not that big of a deal to me	I'm satisfied with the amount I get	More would be nice	I'd love to have more!
24	...comes to talk to me when I call for her from another room in the house.						
25	...comes and finds me when she wants something rather than calling from another room and expecting me to come.						
26	...buys me things without my asking						
27	... calls to say "hi" when we're apart.						
28	...asks me how my day went.						
29	...pampers me by doing small things for me that I could easily do for myself.						
30	...is playful or spontaneous with me.						
31	...smiles at me for no reason.						
32	...wants emotional support from me						
33	...makes plans with me about how we want our future to be.						
34	...stops what she's doing and acknowledges (even for a moment) what I say.						
35	...thinks about (and takes into account) my preferences and needs without me even having to say anything.						
36	...takes care of me when I'm not feeling well.						
37	...lets me know what her plans are or when they change						
38	...laughs at me when I'm funny						
39	...makes me laugh						
40	...remembers to follow through on things she says she'll do.						
41	...listens to me and remembers what I say.						
42	...is the first one to try to make things better after an argument.						
43	...realizes when I need something and gets it for me without being asked						
44	...doesn't hesitate to do something for me when I ask.						
45	...makes occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, & holidays special.						

Table 12.2
Making a Request for More Connection or Engagement

Formula for Success	Ineffective Alternative <i>(sometimes conveyed with attitude rather than words)</i>
<p>“There’s nothing wrong with how you have been acting. It’s just different in some ways than what I would like. I realize we’re different and I don’t expect you to be exactly how I want you to be. I’m sure that part of the solution is for me to make some adjustments in my expectations. But I hope you ‘ll consider trying some different things, too.”</p>	<p>“Anyone who had their wits about them would know that this sort of thing is important in a relationship and realize that they should be doing it without being asked!”</p>
<p>“What do you think might help you feel more like connecting in the way I’m wanting?”</p>	<p>“I don’t care if you feel like doing it or not. Grow up! Buck up! It’s your responsibility!”</p>
<p>“Any efforts you put into this would mean a lot to me.”</p>	<p>Failing to express appreciation when efforts are made. Criticizing the efforts for being sub-standard.</p>
<p>“By the way, what would <u>you</u> like more of?”</p>	<p>Asking your partner for changes but neglecting to ask her what changes she would like you to make.</p>

Appendix I Table 1 - The Disagreement-Related Habits

The “Openness and Flexibility” Habits

1. **Avoid a Judgmental Attitude.** Don’t jump to conclusions. Give the benefit of the doubt and with an open mind, ask your partner why she acted as she did, or why she is thinking the way she is. Consider that this situation might not be about right/wrong, but rather about legitimately different wants, needs, opinions, priorities or standards.
2. **Find the Understandable Part.** Find and acknowledge the part of her reasoning or viewpoint that you can understand or agree with, even if you can’t agree with everything she’s saying.
3. **Identify the Underlying Needs, Values and Worries.** If her reasons don’t make sense to you, instead of concluding that they are faulty, assume that there are things influencing her that aren’t immediately apparent to you. There may be underlying needs, values or worries that are influencing her viewpoint or action in the present situation in ways that you don’t understand. Ask her, “What do you think I don’t understand?” (Try to explain the needs, values or worries that you have that may be influencing you, too).
4. **Offer Assurance.** Assure her that you’re trying to be flexible and keep an open mind, and that you realize that you may have legitimately different opinions, wants, needs, priorities or expectations that come to play in situations like these. Let her know that there’s no reason why your viewpoint or preferences should count more than hers.
5. **Give and Ask for Equal Regard.** Let your partner know that you’re willing to keep an open mind to the potential merit of her viewpoint. If a decision needs to be made, be willing to be flexible and attempt to find a middle ground. Ask her to do the same.

The “Standing Up” Habits

6. **Standing Up for Yourself without Making a Big Deal About the Fact that You Had To.** Combine a non-judgmental attitude with a willingness to rock the boat when your wants, needs or priorities are not being given equal regard.
 - a. **Ask and Offer.** Without making a big deal of it, *ask* her to try to be more open-minded or flexible, while offering assurance that you don’t expect her to agree with you or to just blindly comply with your wishes – you’re just asking her to be open to the possibility that you might have a legitimate viewpoint and to be willing to give and take when decisions need to be made.
 - b. **Broaden the Scope.** If she continues to be dismissive or inflexible, rather than assuming that her behavior is due to selfishness, immaturity or some other bad personality trait, consider that she might be uncooperative because she’s mad at you about something else, or because she’s feeling stressed or out of control in another area of her life. Ask her about it, and be willing to discuss it. Then return to your request.
 - c. **Temporarily Distance Yourself.** If she continues to criticize or disregard you, let her know that you don’t want to be around her right now.
 - d. **Don’t Make a Big Deal of It.** When you’re by yourself, lighten up and let go of anger and resentment. You don’t have to make a big deal of her inflexible behavior or closed minded attitude. It’s not a crime that she acted this way. It’s natural for her to feel strongly about things that are important to her and to be biased toward her own point of view. You just need to be sure that she respects your feelings and opinions, too.
 - e. **Try Again Later.** Begin a new conversation without a chip on your shoulder. Don’t try to get your partner to see how “wrong” her inflexible or closed minded attitude was. Don’t demand an apology. Simply return to the issue that didn’t get resolved and try to resolve it again, beginning with the Openness and Flexibility skills.
 - f. **Refuse to Continue “Business as Usual” (only if needed).** Communicate open-mindedness, flexibility, and willingness to give and take in several rounds of conversation. If your partner still refuses to do the same, make it clear that it doesn’t feel right to you to pretend everything is okay. Inform her of your intention to put some distance between the two of you. Clarify that you’re still willing to try to find common ground, and that you’re only distancing yourself because it doesn’t feel like she cares about you enough to give your opinions and priorities equal regard.

Appendix II Table 1 - The Standing Up Quadrants

People who get respect and cooperation from their partners have the ability to stand up for themselves without resentment, and without making a big deal of the fact that they had to (See the shaded quadrant below).

Did you require equal regard?

(Did you require that your opinions, priorities or preferences be given as much consideration as your partner's?)

	Yes, I Required Equal Regard	No, I didn't Require Equal Regard
<p>Did you feel resentful that your partner put you in a position of having to stand up for yourself?</p> <p>YES, I resented the fact that I had to stand up for myself</p>	<p><i>Standing Up For Yourself Resentfully</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You held your ground and required that your partner be respectful of your wants, needs and opinions, and you required compromise. However, you also acted like there was something wrong with her for having a hard time giving your viewpoint as much credibility as hers, or for wanting to have her own way. Although you required that your partner respect your wants, needs and opinions, your "shame on you" attitude likely stirred up her natural defenses and made her resent you rather than respect you for standing up for yourself. 	<p><i>Not Standing Up For Yourself; Feeling Resentful About Being Dismissed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You felt disapproving, disgusted or resentful, but didn't believe that it would get you anywhere to try to require equal consideration. It wasn't worth the hassle. Your partner felt put down by you even though you "gave in." Your partner didn't feel grateful for you "giving in." In fact, she may still be quite angry with you, and even less likely to respect your feelings and opinions in the future. If you have allowed yourself to be taken advantage of repeatedly, you have probably begun to distance yourself emotionally from your partner. Unfortunately, this makes it even less likely that she will treat you with more respect in the future.
<p>No, I didn't mind standing up for myself</p>	<p><i>Standing Up For Yourself Without Resentment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You didn't try to "win" at her expense; you just required that she be respectful of your wants, needs and opinions, and that she be willing to find ways to meet in the middle. You held your ground without making a big deal of how awful she was for having a hard time giving your viewpoint as much credibility as her, or for wanting to have her own way. Although she might not have liked that you stood up for yourself, the fact that you did it without putting her down likely increased her respect for you. 	<p><i>Not Standing Up For Yourself, Not Feeling Resentful</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You didn't require equal consideration, but neither did you feel upset about having your feelings disregarded. You may not have felt that you deserved to be given equal consideration, or if you did deserve it, it wasn't going to happen and it wasn't worth getting upset about. Without meaning to, you encouraged your partner to disrespect you. You may be trying to ignore or distract yourself from the fact that your partner isn't willing to value your feelings and opinions equally.