

WHEN WE ARE NOT GETTING ALONG THIS IS...



Hurt

Rejected

Alone

Invisible

Not- important

Abandoned

Desperate

Disconnected

Deprived

Isolated

Inadequate

Afraid of Failure

Overwhelmed

Numb-frozen

Afraid-scared

Not Wanted

Not Desired

Judged

Criticized

Shamed

Empty

Common Phrases Used by Withdrawers and Pursuers

Withdrawers Say:

“I never get it right or satisfy him/her.”

“I don’t bother – what’s the point?”

“I can’t believe that he/she can take something so small and blow it out of proportion.”

“I don’t know what I feel. I am lost.”

“He/she gives me that look, and I am paralyzed.”

“He/she never initiates sex, it’s always up to me!”

“I can never get it right. It’s like he/she has a score card and I always come up short. That’s all I hear anyway is what I do wrong and never what is going right.”

“I feel like she’s got me dangling from the end of a rope that is going to fray at any minute and it’s all going to be over.”

“I don’t feel anything, nothing at all.”

Pursuers Say:

“My heart is breaking.” “I am going to die.”

“He/she is never there. He/she is always at work.”

“She never looks at me when I talk to him/her. He/she just watches TV. The only time he/she comes to me is when he/she wants sex.”

“There are birthdays that are forgotten or Mother’s Day when nobody gives me a card.”

“I do it by myself and just take care of it on my own.”

“I’m way down on his/her list, after the kids, work, his family, and then maybe me.”

“He/she is not there- no one has ever been there.”

“He/she won’t listen! He/she never listens. It doesn’t matter how long I talk to him or how many examples I give him or how hard I try – I can never get through to him/her.”

“It’s like we are roommates or brothers and sisters. Any hope for passion or romance is futile – he/she just doesn’t want it.”

“Other couples seem to have lives that are full, and they enjoy each other. We don’t have anything.”

ti Check all the statements that reflect the way you feel or what you do when you and your partner are fighting or not getting along. Look back over the list and drde a few to indicate the most important items.

What/Do.....

I criticize
I attack
I blame
I defend
I analyze
I rationalize
I get quiet
I become cold or aloof
I clam up
I withdraw
I avoid conflict
I leave

What/Feel.....

I feel scared.
I feel afraid.
I feel hurt
I feel vulnerable
I feel worried or nervous.
I feel disappointed.
I feel let down.
I feel sad.
I feel alone or lonely.
I feel hopeless.
I feel down or depressed.
I feel empty.
I feel disconnected.
I feel isolated.
I feel ignored.
I feel shut out or pushed away.
I feel rejected.
I feel-abandoned.
I feel misunderstood.
I feel my partner is never there for me.
I feel frustrated.
I feel angry.
I feel like getting back.
I feel like protecting myself.
I feel guarded.
I feel like clinging to my partner.
I feel flooded with emotion.
I feel unable to calm myself down
I feel overwhelmed.
I feel confused.
I feel unable to focus my thoughts.
I feel blank.
I feel numb
I have trouble putting thoughts into words.
I feel smothered.

I feel it's always my fault.
I feel judged.
I feel blamed or criticized.
I feel put down.
I feel I don't know what I have done. I feel analyzed.
I feel invalidated.
I feel discounted.
I feel attacked.
I feel controlled.
I feel intimidated.
I feel dismissed or "blown ofr".
I feel uncared for or unwanted.
I feel unlovable.
I feel unattractive.
I feel unimportant.
I feel inadequate.
I feel small or insignificant. I feel I don't matter.
I feel I've failed.
I feel guilty.

In My Body I Feel.....

I feel my heart speeding up.
I feel tense somewhere in my body.
I feel uneasy in my stomach.
I feel tightness in my throat.
I feel pressure in my chest.

How We Interact During Conflict.... I

often want to avoid talking about our relationship.
__ During an argument, I become become silent, withdraw and don't want to discuss things.
__ My partner often pushes an issue and won't let it drop.
__ I often want to push my partner to talk about our relationship.
__ I often get angry and critical to get my partner to talk.
__ My partner withdraws a lot and won't face an issue when I want to talk.

Other Feelings:-----

Understanding Your Negative Cycle

Couples get caught in “negative cycles” of interaction. A “negative cycle” is a repeating pattern of negative behaviors, thoughts and feelings that causes distress. You react to your partner’s reactions and your partner reacts to your reactions and you go round and round in a never-ending negative cycle. Understanding and untangling your “negative cycles” is a first step in climbing out of distress. The exercise below will help you with this process.

When my partner and I are not getting along:

I often react by (*describe behaviors*)...

My partner often reacts to me by (*describe behaviors*)...

When my partner reacts this way, I often *feel*...

When I feel this way I, see myself as....

When I feel this way I long for or need...

When I react the way I do, I guess that my partner feels...

ON A SEPERATE SHEET OF PAPER, PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR NEGATIVE CYCLE OF THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR PARTNER WHEN YOU TRIGGER EACH OTHER AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS FOR BOTH OF YOU IF THINGS BEGIN TO ESCLATE.

Assessing Attachment Styles:

The manner in which the client has learned to manage the response he/she expects to the question: "Can I depend on you when I really need you?"

Secure attachment:

- Able and willing to openly express positive and negative emotions
- Able to give partner the benefit of the doubt
- Seeks out partner when distressed
- Available to comfort and support partner when partner is needy

Avoidant attachment:

- Not seek support from partner
- Finds it difficult to provide support especially when partner is anxious or needy, and withdraws precisely when partner needs him/her
- Dismisses or minimizes threats and hurts to self
- Intellectualizes and exhibits restricted emotionality, focusing instead on tasks and activities

Anxious attachment:

- Has an intense need for support and affection from partner
- Catastrophizes and exaggerates threats and hurts to self
- Vigilant and readily interprets partner's behaviors as a threat
- Demanding on partner for time and attention
- Exhibits intense emotionality

Fearful avoidant style:

- Manages fears by avoiding intimacy and has difficulty being emotionally and physically close
- Holds in emotions and is reluctant to self-disclose
- Has difficulty believing partner cares about them
- Not seek support from partner, or seeks it only to withdraw when it is offered
- Behaves in a passive manner
- Has often been violated in love relationships