



EGUIDE 2023

THE CRAFT OF RELATIONSHIPS FOR MEN

Learn the skills to transform your relationship, improve your communication, rebuild trust, resolve conflict and strengthen your connection.

WWW.PSYCHOLOGYFORMEN.COM.AU

PSYCHOLOGY FOR MEN

INSTRUCTOR



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Psychologist

Over the past 7 years, I have facilitated thousands of sessions with men going through periods of poor mental health and relationship issues. For this e-Guide, I have drawn from clinical practice experience and training to deliver the core principles and skills that have helped my clients transform the way they communicate, resolve conflict, repair, and reconnect with their partners.

A man and a woman are shown from behind, embracing each other in a bright, sunlit room. The man is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, also in a white t-shirt. Her hand is resting on his shoulder. The background features a window with light streaming in and some indoor plants.

PSYCHOLOGY FOR MEN

WHAT I OFFER IN THIS E-GUIDE

This e-Guide is a shortened version of my e-Book and course. You will find the core principles and skills that have helped men transform the way they communicate, resolve conflict, repair, and reconnect with their partners.

In the full version and online course, you will dive deeper into these principles, gain expert guidance, essential activities and examples.

To experience the full benefit of these skills, I invite you to join our online course.

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CONNECTING VS FIXING

Learn why fixing and problem solving is not always the right approach.

PART 2

BEING PRESENT & MINDFUL LISTENING

If we are not present, we are distracted, which means we are not listening or connected in our relationship.

PART 3

THE BLAME GAME

It's common to fall into the trap of blaming others or a situation for how we feel. However, when we do this, a few things occur that make it difficult for us to change.

PART 4

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Everything moves in cycles, even our relationships. Learn how you can anticipate and adapt to different phases.

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How the repair process plays out after conflict or disagreements is probably the biggest factor that can predict relationship longevity.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE TRIGGERED

We will inevitably be triggered in our relationships. In these situations we need to be able to respond instead of react from our emotional trigger.



MOVING FORWARD

How to re-create the relationship and move forward in a more collaborative, shared and effective way.

LET'S BEGIN

PART 1

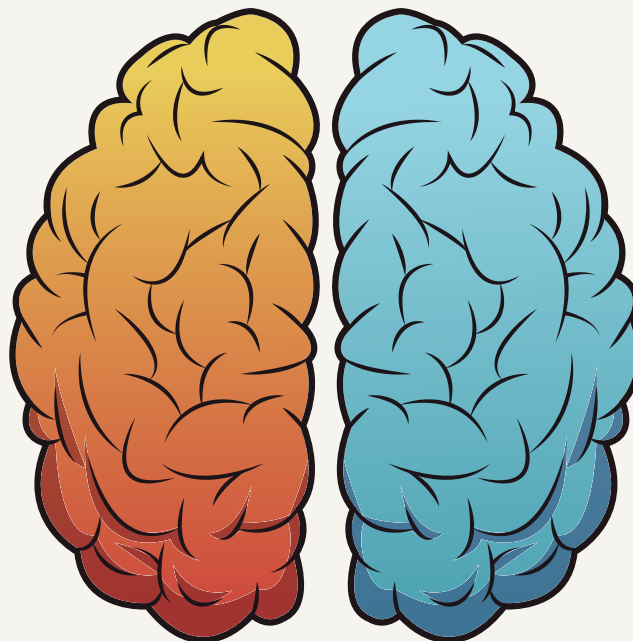
THE CONNECTING VS FIXING MODES OF MIND

Let's face it - men tend to use logical and rational thinking to fix most problems. When you look at your experience, you are likely to find many situations where this approach has escalated rather than resolved the problem. The 'fixing' approach is not always the most appropriate approach when it comes to emotions, relationships and living.

So, I want to introduce you to the connecting mode of mind and the principle that when emotions are involved, using the skills of connecting is much more effective than only using the fixing mode of mind skills. Below is a comparison between the 'fixing' and 'connecting' modes.

FIXING MODE OF MIND

- TRY TO FIX
- BEING OVERLY LOGICAL & RATIONAL
- ANALYTICAL
- PROBLEM OR SOLUTION FOCUSED
- CONSEQUENCE BASED
- JUDGEMENTAL
- CONDITIONAL
- MIND BASED
- COMPARISON
- SEPERATION



CONNECTING MODE OF MIND

- LISTENING
- EMPATHISING
- UNDERSTANDING
- REFLECTING
- HEARING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS
- NON-JUDGEMENTAL
- ACCEPTING
- UNCONDITIONAL
- HEART BASED
- VALIDATION
- WHOLENESS
- TOGETHERNESS

CORE SKILLS

Here are the core skills to consider when trying to connect.

Reflect emotions & demonstrate understanding

- I can see you are upset/frustrated/sad/disappointed etc.
- How are you feeling about that?
- I can see that has impacted you a lot.
- I am unsure what you are feeling, can you clarify that for me?
- That must have been difficult/hard/annoying/fun/inspiring etc.
- How come this has had such an impact on you?

Tips

Remember, connecting is not about whether you agree or disagree, or how you would feel if the same was happening to you or judging your partner's reaction. It is about being open, curious and understanding of their experience.

Be willing to listen

- Give time and space for them to talk
- Try not interrupting or providing your views, opinion or experience
- Provide silence, you don't necessarily have to say that much
- Provide non-verbal encouragement like (mmm, oh, nods)
- Keep eye contact and stay engaged

How to help

- Let them request your views or opinions before giving them
- Ask if you can help or in what way - e.g. I am here if you need
- Encourage them to think of solutions before giving your opinion

Tips

The most important aspect of connecting is listening to your partner. In some cases, listening is the only thing you are required to do. On the occasions that help or support is requested, then together you can come up with a solution and use the 'fixing' mode of mind wisely.

Old Way vs New Way

This could be how you pivot in situations from a fixing mode to a connecting mode.

THEN

Try to solve the problem

Ignore or not acknowledge emotions

Give your opinion

Take over the solution

Be judgemental and critical about the solution

NOW

I can understand how you feel (sad/disappointed) etc.


Listen mindfully and be curious

Ask how that has impacted them

Ask what they might do about it

Recognise we are all learning

VS

A man in a white t-shirt is standing with a gold bicycle against a grey wall. The bicycle has 'LOUIS' written on the frame and 'LEGEND COMPE' on the top tube. The man is looking to the right. A large white text box is overlaid on the image.

**The right knowledge,
tools and skills are
imperative if you are
going to play an active
and helpful role in
repairing, resolving
conflicts, reconnecting
and rebuilding trust in
your relationship.**

**For an in-depth dive,
more practical examples,
additional guidance, and
more resources, join my
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CONT.



BEING PRESENT & MINDFUL LISTENING

Staying present essentially means that we can intentionally come back into and connect with our present moment experience. That means we can stay aware of what is unfolding moment by moment and track it. We can notice when our attention is drifting off and bring it back into the present and focus on what is going on in front of us.

In a relationship and communication context, it means that we can listen mindfully. When we are present and listening mindfully, we can track what our partner is saying, we are aware of their non-verbal signs and emotions and we can reflect these back accurately.





**Mindful listening is the
ability to:**

**Be open, understanding
and curious about your
partner's experience in a
non-judgemental & kind
way.**

CONT.

PART **3**

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Everything moves in cycles, even our relationships. Think about it, over the years you have changed, your partner is changing and the world around us changes. If we do not understand how these cycles work, or learn how to adapt to the challenges that arise in each phase of the cycle, conflict and tension will surely let us know that things are not working well.

So, we can look at conflict and tension as a problem. Or, I propose we can look at it as a signal that we are out of sync with the cycles and phases within the relationship. This usually is a sign that we need to change and adapt.

Ending and letting go of the things that are not working in the relationship always leads to the space and energy for new growth and a new phase of the relationship.

Cycles with-in a Relationship

1: Growth

New roles, expectations, rules, structures, patterns, and habits are negotiated in the relationship. We are creating a new way to be, relate and work in the relationship.



4: Ending & Letting Go

We need to let go of old expectations and rules that previously defined the relationship as they are not working anymore. This allows us to move into a new growth phase. Stagnation at this phase leads to conflict, tension and crisis.

2: Stability

The relationship undergoes a period of stability and consistency.

3: Dissolution

The only constant in life is change, so if we continue to hold onto the 'old rules', we will begin to experience unease, tension and dissatisfaction. These are signals that we need to renegotiate aspects of the relationship that are not working.



HOW TO NAVIGATE THE ENDING & LETTING GO PHASE

The beauty in this phase is that as we address the issues, we can let go of the ideas, assumptions, and expectations that are no longer working or relevant in the relationship and this provides the relationship space and energy to move back into a creative phase.

IDENTIFY WHAT IS NOT WORKING

Identify areas in the relationship where things are not working. What are the arguments about? What causes tension?

OUTDATED EXPECTATIONS

What expectations, assumptions and rules of yours are no longer helping or working in the relationship?

OUTDATED ROLES

What roles are you still playing that you no longer want to? What roles do not work in the relationship anymore?

OUTDATED VALUES

What values are you still holding onto that no longer meet where the other person or relationship is at.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

What changes are you resisting? What are you trying to control that is not yours to control? Be willing to change and evolve for the better.

LETTING GO

Begin letting go of what is outdated and no longer working. Address the issues that need to be addressed. Be willing to move forward first by letting go.



Old Way vs New Way

This could be how you pivot in situations from being stuck to working together, creating solutions and reconnecting.

THEN

Struggle with tension, dissatisfaction and conflict

Rigidly hold onto ideas, roles, expectations in the relationship

Feel like things are going around in circles

Not address issues

Suppress emotions and feelings

VS

NOW

Use these as signals that something needs to change

Being flexible to communicate when these are not working anymore

Recognise where the relationship is in the cycle

Readily address issues to create new ways of being in the relationship

Acknowledge emotions and restructure the relationship so that it can work for both of you

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more practical examples,
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CONT.



THE BLAME GAME

It's common to fall into the trap of blaming others or even blaming a situation for how we feel. However, when we do this, a few things occur that make it difficult for us to change.

When we cast blame, we disempower ourselves because what we are saying is that we need something else to change – a person or situation – before we can start feeling better or happier. The problem with this is that we cannot control another person or situation – so we become stuck waiting for something to change or make us feel better.

Secondly, if you blame your partner or another person for how you feel – this will usually trigger their defense system – and then you find yourself in a 'blaming tennis match' that might look something like this: 'well you do this' – 'well you did this' and back and forth. The conflict intensifies with no resolution.

Well, we need to take ownership of our own situation and emotions. This means recognising what we have contributed to get ourselves into the situation or conflict we are in.

Sometimes we make decisions unconsciously or unknowingly and it might turn out to be a bad decision and something goes wrong – but that is not someone else's fault – we made the decision.

Once you take ownership of your actions and decisions – it gives you the power to change and make corrections in your life and in your relationships that lead to better outcomes. So, instead of waiting for your partner to change, which is extremely disempowering and frustrating, we take accountability and ownership and see where we need to adapt and change to make things better.

Old Way vs New Way

This could be how you pivot in situations from blaming to taking agency.

THEN

Blame someone else

Blame a situation

Think everything should go to plan

Ruminate on what is wrong

Focus on the negatives and problems

NOW

See how you have contributed to the situation and change that

Look for what you can control and do that

Recognise life is about learning, problems are inevitable

Look for constructive solutions

See life as a challenge and see how all situations have positives and challenges

VS

CONT.

PART 5

HOW TO REPAIR & RECONNECT

How the repair process plays out after conflict or disagreements is probably the biggest factor that can predict relationship longevity. Poor repair process means smaller conflicts will continue compounding, building to a point where the relationship is potentially not repairable.

A significant part of the repair process is both people acknowledging their reactions and what they have contributed to the situation without getting defensive. All the skills we have gone through will help in the repair and reconnect process.



STEPS TO REPAIR & RECONNECTING

This is a brief outline of steps to help repair and reconnection after conflict. Use the skills you have learnt so far in each step.

01

ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge the situation did not go well and you would like to revisit it.

02

CONNECT

Show you understand what they were feeling. Reflect back their emotions/feeling. Don't try to fix anything or problem solve.

03

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Identify what you were feeling in that situation and don't blame the other person.

04

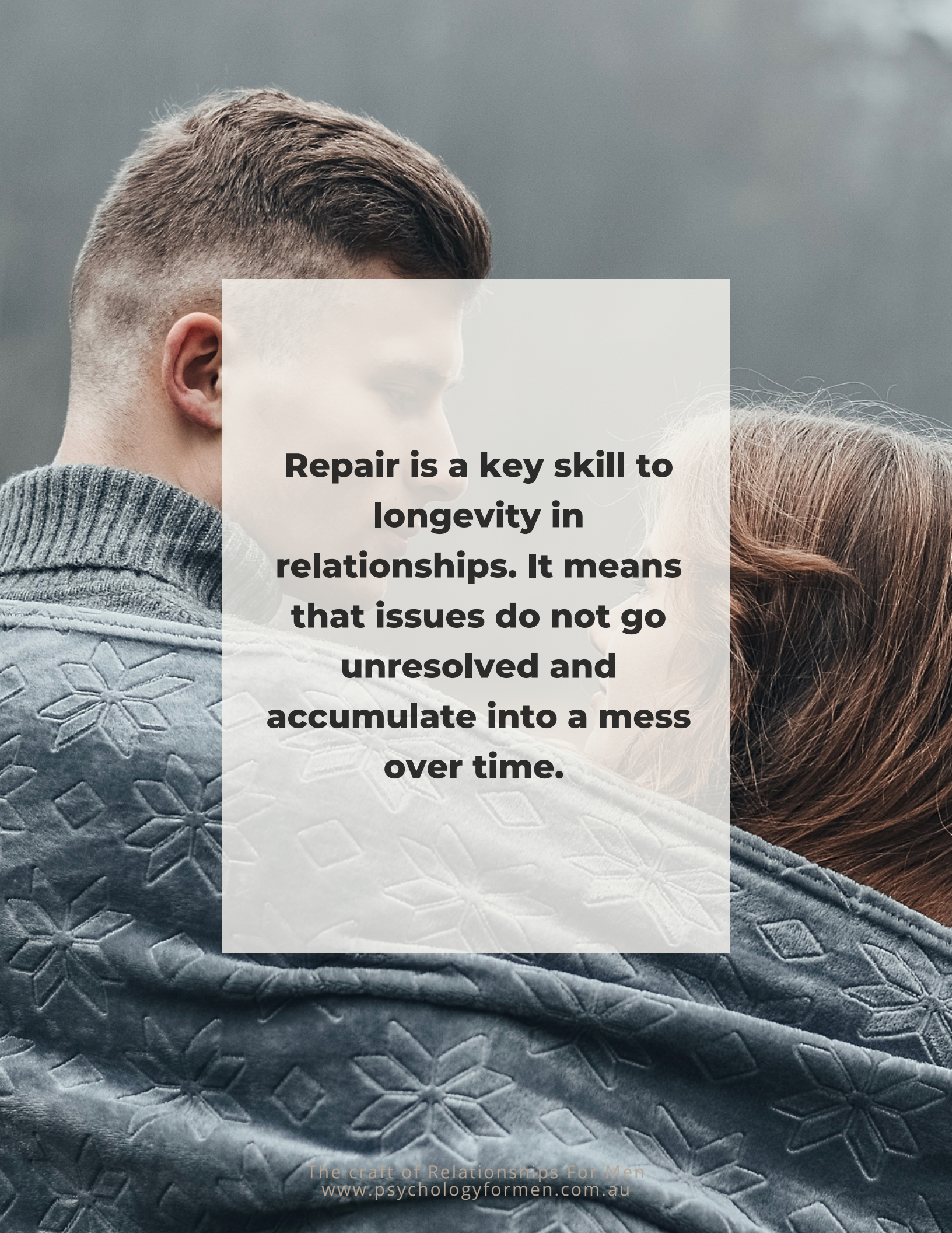
OLIVE BRANCH

Suggest that you would like to try again and see if you and your partner can come to a workable solution.

05

RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Set some rules for communication that you both agree to follow. Like, letting the other person finish, no blaming etc.

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, looking at each other. The man is on the left, wearing a grey sweater with a snowflake pattern. The woman is on the right, with long brown hair. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid in the center, containing text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

**Repair is a key skill to
longevity in
relationships. It means
that issues do not go
unresolved and
accumulate into a mess
over time.**

Old Way vs New Way

This could be how you pivot to a new way of repairing and reconnecting.

THEN

Withdrawal & disconnecting

React from your hurt,
frustration or anger

Try to explain, rationalise or
fix things logically

Trying to rush the repair
process

Give solutions, ultimatums
and assurances

NOW

Acknowledge things went
wrong

Be ok with your
uncomfortable emotions

Connect emotionally

Take the time and space to
really listen and repair,
build trust.

Seek a solution that is
workable for both
individuals

VS

**For an in-depth dive,
more practical examples,
additional guidance, and
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CONT.


PART 6

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE TRIGGERED

It is normal to be triggered emotionally at times in your relationship. Partners don't always meet eye to eye. It is important though, to understand why you are being triggered, and be able to identify the emotions/feelings you are experiencing and the thoughts, narrative, beliefs or expectations that are contributing to your triggering.

Although our triggers occur in the context of the relationship, it is not the other person solely causing you to feel that way. Your expectations, interpretations, beliefs and narrative are also responsible. When you are being highly triggered it is better to take some time to work out what is happening for you, rather than react, blame the other person or do something that is not helpful.



A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a light-colored couch. The man, on the left, is wearing a plaid shirt and dark pants, looking down with a distressed expression, his hand on his head. The woman, on the right, is wearing a purple top and blue jeans, looking towards the man. A semi-transparent white box with black text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Although our triggers occur in the context of the relationship, it is not the other person solely causing you to feel that way. Your expectations, interpretations, beliefs and narrative are also responsible.

CONT.



MOVING FORWARD

Relationships are an evolving game. For a relationship to really work, be rich and satisfying, both individuals require a level of self-awareness and be able to identify what is not working.

You both need to be able to acknowledge triggers, expectations, needs and values and be able to communicate these in an open and receptive way.

After a breakdown in the relationship or a situation that triggers conflict or tension, we have an opportunity to repair and then rework that situation. We can identify what went wrong, the aspects of the approach that did not work and re-create it, rework it so that next time you at least can recognise the same pattern and can change and learn.



Old Way vs New Way

This could be how you pivot from old patterns to new ways of being in the relationship.

THEN

Stuck in old patterns

Holding onto rigid roles

Holding onto old beliefs
and expectations

Fixated on right vs wrong

Rigid and attached

NOW

Open & curious about
creating something new


Willing to recreate roles

Willing to redefine values,
beliefs and expectations

Focused on what will work

Flexible and adaptive

VS

A romantic couple embracing outdoors at sunset. The man is on the left, wearing a dark polo shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a grey top and a black choker. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a soft, warm glow from the setting sun.

**Relationships require a
commitment and
willingness to
continually learn, change
and grow with the other
person.**

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WEBSITE

Take a look at our website for more resources and upcoming events, courses and sessions.

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FACEBOOK

We regularly post our articles and resources on our fb group. We invite you to join and keep up to date.

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INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

Need individual guidance? Book a session now to discuss your personal situation.

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**THANK
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