ReDiscovering Connections
Monica Houttuin, LCSW CST

ReDiscovering Your Connection

Welcome, and congratulations on taking even just a moment to download this bundle for rediscovering connection. Whether you're feeling like friends or maybe a little bit like **"frenemies". This package for connection will start you on a refresher or even better, help you dig into some core skills that you'll need to go on the reconnecting Journey.**

In the relationship game **we really are given little to nothing to handle this most important relationship**. Did you find that you were sent down the Journey of Fairy Tales. Over the days and years and as you've been through a lot, those little words and things are not helping out.

By the time you are in a long-term relationship, becoming a mature couple, you will have to examine **how you keep your love alive**. The fundamental thing that most people want to know is,

Are you there for me? **Do I matter?**

I'm going to take a risk here and suggest that the root of almost all upsets and disagreement is a fundamental issue. Here's the thing I really do think in the middle of all the, you know, you hurt me, you slighted me, you left me out you didn't protect me, I think that was really going on.....

See,**our hearts can smell a rat and no matter what you say** happened, my heart is going to take score.

Do we really take score? Well, not at first. I know you might feel like your partner does but here's what I really mean. Since we just want to be connected and we want to be attached, then part of the problem becomes this When those slights begin to happen, I can tell you all the reasons that I forgot, I can tell you why I left you out, I didn't agree with you, why I was mad at you, I didn't accept an apology, but **what my heart wants to know deep, deep down is,**

"Are you listening to me? **Do you love me?"**

If I had my chance I would tell every new couple getting together that there is a little bit of advice they need to follow. I would tell them that there are **three key things to being there for your partner**.

Remember, when your partner is talking or even "complaining", you want to listen, you want to make sure you thoroughly understand their concern. you want them to see you hearing them and feeling them even though you might not quite get what they're saying and I'm gonna be like a detective for what's their unmet need. Really, what's going on, taking out the trash probably isn't what's got them worked up and I imagine that something else is going on. So remember, this is somebody you love, it's not a competition or a battle. The goal is a healthy, loving survival.

So **over time the fairy tales never included this**, they never talked about how we manage the day to day as I said it wasn't about chocolates and it wasn't about roses. They're fun and fine and they highlight an already healthy relationship, but if you're missing the day-to-day moments to take care of your partner, then those really don't matter. We want to close the emotional distance and we want to remember to play a little bit.

Now we're going to learn some fun things to do to be a little bit more playful and a little bit more risk-taking with one another. When you got together. You were pretty on purpose about hanging out and meeting up about some adventures. Perhaps even the most quiet of couples has to exert some effort to actually win the guy, catch the girl. We did a lot of things to be together and we were much more playful.

In the Worksheet PDFs you're going to find an activity for you to do. You are going to follow instructions on the handout.

I hope you will take **time to do these exercises.** Sometimes we get in such a rut that we don't really want to even think about these things....
...but here's how to be friendly with your partner.

What I'd like you to do is realize that it's important to connect with your partner. It's important to say yes to your partner. So on the exercises I want you to go ahead and complete it if you haven't and if your partner won't join you, go ahead and role play their part as well. You can do almost all of these on your own if you must.

Here's an example of how not to do it . So to be honest it's easier to do nothing. It's easier to say that won't work. We already tried that, but remember in reaching for your partner someone always has to go first to rebuild and improve the couple connecting. Each step builds on one another so it's important for you to do this step here.
Remember your partner's watching and wants you to connect with them. I need you to take action. Make sure you listen, you gaze, and you give your partner the benefit of the doubt. You participate in the activity with them and above all else you use kindness as you talk with your partner and listen.

…..and **if you don't mind, shoot me an email to let me know how it went.** It's a small exercise, but not necessarily simple and it's a tiny step on the path to rekindling your intimacy.

Finally get to the bottom of what's holding you back.
Email Monica and get started
ReKindling your Intimacy

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Please Just Listen To Me

We don't just need our partner to hear us when we talk, we need to feel like you "GET ME". Here are the crucial checkpoints to make sure you are listening. You will be surprised how this can change the conversation. Research says most of us just want to feel listened to.

Ready To Listen Checklist

- Sit, do not stand, or at least lie facing one another
- Look at one another eye to eye- hold your gaze for 3 to 5 sec.
- All activities are stopped. Phones are in another room, TV is off.
- Watch for your partner's breath in and out and try to match them.
- Now, for fun, Rock, Paper, Scissors to see who should begin.
- Remember to smile and this is fun, right. Now look for whatever your topics you would discuss and begin listening.

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The Power of ONE.

Why do we want to COMMUNICATE so much with our partner? 1. Like all humans you want to be listened to and understood. If you are upset and need to discuss it, who better than your partner to share and calm down with. Notice nowhere in there did the need to ruin my partner's day come up. We just need to share. The trick comes when we are upset with one another.

One of the simplest, but not easy, things for you to do as a couple is to Communicate. **This often goes wrong because we are both talking at the same time and we are talking about many issues, feelings and events all in one conversation. This is extremely unproductive, unsatisfying and at worse dangerous.**

Below is an extremely simple way to truly "listen to your partner". Don't be worried if it seems simple or silly. Believe me Your partner is going to love hearing you listen word by word to them. Give it a try. When we move from being reactive to everything our partner is trying to say to being on purpose, it is seen as a true act of love. You do not have to SOLVE anything or TELL YOUR SIDE you just have to listen very very accurately.

Listen/Support/Tune In Speaker asks for the official attention

of the listener and the **Listener agrees to LISTEN**

Communication 101 for Listener

	Following their logic, you are just telling them that it makes sense they feel this way about this. (you know everyone is right about how THEY FEEL) this is not saying you agree or you would feel this way	resentful)
Tune In	See if you can put yourself in their world and image what it was like for them, try to feel what they would	If I were in your shoes I imagine I might also feel… IF I WERE YOU. List 3 from the List of

	likely feel	feelings below

The Power of One Listening Session I

		Partner 1	Partner 2
 Listen Support	One Speaker	Name	[redacted]
	One Listener	[redacted]	Name
	One Topic	Picks the topic	Listens by repeating using the instructions above.
	One At A Time	Partner 2 summarize what your partner said in writing in the next box >>>>>>>>>>>>>	_____ _____ _____ _____

Notes: How is my partner feeling_____

Now Switch but do not discuss the same thing change topics and repeat the process. Later you can ask them to LISTEN to you if you would like to respond to what they have said. Let it rest a while. Pick what you would like them to listen to.

The Power of One Listening Session II

		Partner 1	Partner 2
	One Speaker	Name	[redacted]
	One Listener	[redacted]	Name
	One Topic	Picks the topic	
	One At A Time	Summarize what your partner said in the next box>>>>>>>>>>	_____ _____ _____ _____

Notes: How is my partner feeling_____

You Don't talk like this forever, but it is good practice.

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Now go on to see if you can carry this over into a full conversation …..The Story of Us.

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Hit Replay

The following questions are to be answered about how you and your partner got together. Some of you will be married and have that whole meeting, courtship, engagement and marriage story to tell.

Don't worry if you are not married you still have quite a story to tell. Answer the questions that apply to you and not the other. Do not get your partner's help. When you are done, see how the two of you can blend your perspectives question by question coming up with the story of YOU and how two YOUS became a WE. Do it all at once or spread it out a few minutes a day for a week. If you like and it is fun, one of you could combine the answers to create your own document to share. Please do questions 1-4 on your own and then be prepared to share. You can go on to do questions 5 to the end together.

Question One: Where did you meet your partner? What did you notice about them first. Even before you knew them or talked to them, what do you think made them special? (list three things below).

Question Two: 2. What do you remember most about your first date and the period of your new relationship? What stands out? How long did you date until someone took it to the next level? What were some of the highlights? What was a funny story from your dating time?

Question Three Talk about how you decided to get married. Who proposed and in what manner? Was it a difficult decision? Were you in love? Talk about this time,

Question Four If you are married, list three highlights from the wedding. If you had a honeymoon list two more below. If you are not married, list three reasons you decided to move together. If you wish you can tell your partner any REDO you wish you could do to make that time even better.

Their Turn: Now Listen and Do Not Add. Finally If You Like Combine The Two Stories To Make The Story of WE.

Want to Hear More Please Go On.

Question Five. Looking back over the years, what moments stand out as the happiest period in your relationship? When was a good time for you as a couple?

Question Six. We are not ignoring that tough times happen in relationships, but right now spend 3 minutes to make a note of the 1 or 2 funniest stories about your partner. These stories should bring up a smile at the very least. these low and high points?

Question Seven What are the best qualities of your spouse? Maybe you saw them in the beginning or just grew to know them. Write down 5 characteristics below.

Don't worry if your brain keeps wanting to talk about the tough stuff. There is plenty of time for that. This exercise helps your brain's feel the more positive feelings of the first meeting days.

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Here's to You!!, *Monica xo*