



Core Fears That Get Triggered in Adult Relationships

Which of these have you felt in your primary love relationship?

1. **Fear of being abandoned:** You fear your partner might leave. You feel that your partner doesn't need you as much as you need him or her.
2. **Fear of being unimportant or invisible:** You fear you are not as important to your partner as other things or people, or that you don't really matter.
3. **Fear of being rejected:** You have trouble feeling accepted or valued just the way you are. You fear that you or your needs will be rejected.
4. **Fear of being inadequate or a failure:** Complaints or criticisms trigger fears that you are not good enough, that you are inadequate or unlovable.
5. **Fear of being blamed:** You fear being seen as wrong or as the cause of relationship upsets, so you either defend yourself or shut down in the face of negative feedback.
6. **Fear of being controlled:** You fear feeling weak or vulnerable. You instinctively try to be in charge or control of any situation.
7. **Fear of being trapped or suffocated:** You fear intrusion, losing yourself, or being consumed by others. You become uncomfortable with others' expectations or too much closeness.

Steps for Effective Relationship Repair

- Tell your significant other that you value them, and you don't like seeing them upset.
- Listen without interrupting while you allow your significant other to elaborate about their complaint.
- Engage in reflective listening. For example, *What I am hearing you say is...*

- Ask, *What will resolve your concern?*
- Negotiate a resolution with your significant other.
- Ask your partner if you have fully resolved their concern.

(Monthly, ask your partner: *How satisfied are you with our relationship on a scale of 1 to 10?* If they report anything less than a 10, ask them to tell you their concerns.)

Behaviors That Tell Your Spouse That You Do Not Have a Relationship Service Department

- Shutting down and not saying anything or walking away.
- Rolling your eyes.
- Changing the topic to something more pleasant.
- Shifting the topic to a complaint that you have about your spouse.
- Dominating the conversation, taking all the airtime, or talking over your partner.

(Ask your significant other what behaviors they observe when you are reacting to a relationship complaint.)

How to Make Your Complaint at the Relationship Repair Counter

- Think about what would resolve your complaint before you make it.
- Start by saying something positive about your romantic relationship and your mate.
- Tell your significant other that you are giving them the benefit of the doubt.
- Briefly state only one complaint in two to three sentences.
- Tell your significant other that you have a suggestion for how to repair the complaint and make your request for resolution.

(Think about how you typically make relationship complaints to your significant other. Do you follow the above steps? What steps listed above would you like to focus on for the benefit of the relationship?)