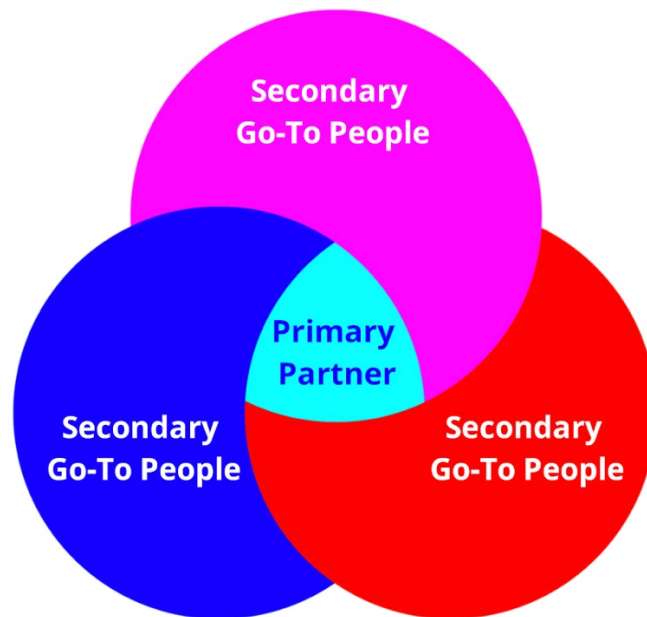




## **Exercise: Map Your Go-to Network**

You and your partner have agreed to be each other's go-to people. How is this working out for you? Use this exercise to find out more about how you actually use each other as go-to people. You can do this exercise either on your own or as a couple. Throughout the week, make a note each time one of you *goes to* the other. Jot down the reason for doing so. It can be something consequential for your relationship or something that just feels important in the moment. For example, it might be to complain about the loud music your neighbor's teenager is playing and to decide who should speak to his parents. Or it might be to get a backrub for sore and tense shoulders. Or to share a crimson sunset visible from the kitchen window.

Of course, even if you have agreed to be each other's primary go-to people, you will both go to various others throughout the week. Make note of your interactions with some of these secondary go-to people as well and your reasons for going to them. If you're doing this on your own, you may have limited information about your partner's secondary go-to people. You may choose to record (or summarize) your go-to data in a chart that illustrates your go-to network. If you and your partner are doing this exercise together, you can each take a separate piece of paper and start by drawing a big circle in the center to represent yourself. Now place your partner in relation to you. Are you both in the circle? See image below for a visual representation of the go-to-network.



Add others to whom you go for help, gossiping, or hanging out. Where are these people in relation to yourself and your partner? Are any in competition with your partner? Compare your charts and see if you appear to be the primary go-to people for each other. If not, talk about it and redraw your chart so your placement as the first to know everything is clarified.

At the end of the week, sit down and review your experience, either by yourself or with your partner. Did you and your partner actually go to each other as often as you thought you might? Were there times one of you wanted to go to the other but didn't? If so, why didn't you? Do you notice anything about your secondary go-to people that you might want to change? For example, when one couple compiled their chart, she discovered he had gone to his mother about organizing his dad's birthday party several days before he mentioned it to her. He apologized for this oversight and promised to keep her more informed about his side of the family in the future. He then pointed out with a smile that he could have fixed the stuck drain himself if she had asked him before she called in the handyman (Tatkin, 2011).