

# THE POWER OF PLAY: A RELATIONSHIP EXERCISE

ADAPTED FROM CHEN, 2019

"Play is the antidote to threat." -Stepehn Porges



Below is an exercise that can be used to incorporate play in your relationship when there is a conflict that causes one partner to feel unsafe. If you haven't developed a self-awareness practice to understand what unsafe feels like for you, consult a therapist.

1. Recall the last 2-3 disagreements you had, and come to an agreement on which disagreement you will recreate/reenact for this game.
2. Each partner picks an animal. It can be your favorite animal, or any other animal. Got it? You're going to use your imagination to mimic the movements and sounds your animal makes.
3. Re-create what the disagreement was about using only movements and sounds your animal makes. You can bark, hiss, meow, roar, slither, pounce, scurry...hopefully you don't try and fly! The one rule is **you can't use human language!**
4. Set the timer for 10 minutes. Stop when time is up or when there is a resolution.
5. When time is up, discuss what the game was like. You can use the questions below:

**How did you experience yourself differently in animal form?**

**How did you experience your partner differently in animal form?**

**What did you notice in your body as you did the exercise?**

**What surprised you?**

**Would you do it again?**