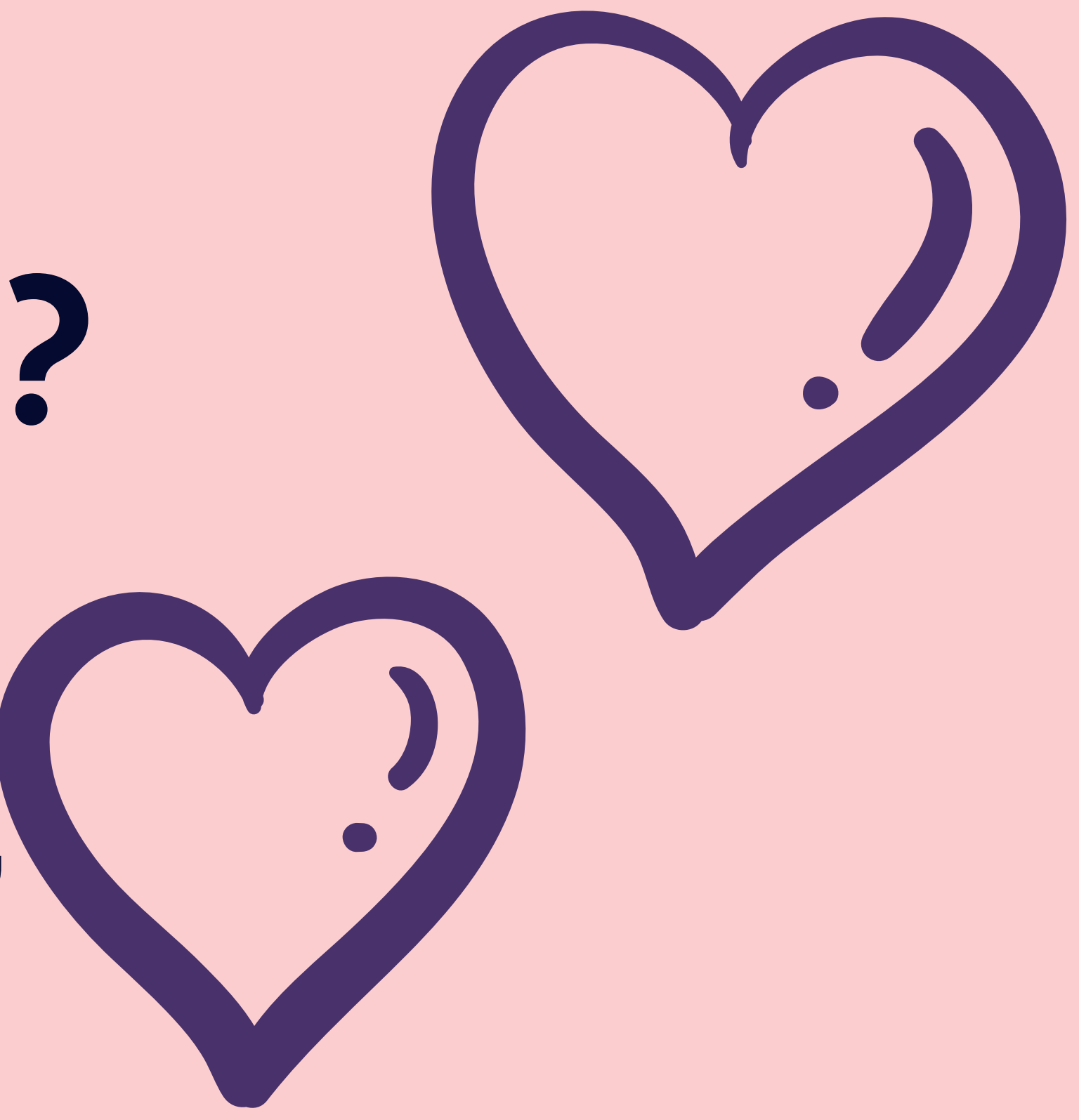


How to have fruitful conversations without triggering each others' defenses?



In relationships, when we look at it from a lens of interdependence we can understand how individual changes don't contribute to relationships as effectively as the changes as a unit may. As Terry Real states, ecological thinking when we work with our partner on reaching a middle ground on what works for both parties and establish a middle ground. **Ecological thinking ensues avoidance of the "one up" trap that is used to gain or maintain power in relationships, instead we may use the idea of "power with" which ensures the power is shared between the pair.**

From a systemic lens, in relationships, our patterns (good or bad) feed into each other and influence the other individual's actions, as opposed to the western idea of independence which focuses on individuality and highlighting change in isolation.

In relationships, we influence each other with our words, behaviours and emotions and this may show up more prominently and stronger in negative cycles or cycles with high emotional reactivity. **In this state, both parties are defensive and may trigger each other. Instead, we could speak when calmer or work around our emotional reactivity with language that describes our narrative rather than the other individual's actions.**

We have attached a worksheet to identify your own negative cycles with your partner or relationships created by Scott R Woolley, PhD. This may help you build a safer and more secure relationship by changing negative cycles to positive ones, any kind of change begins with identification followed by acceptance, only then can we begin the work here. The worksheet on page 2 shows a sample on how you can fill it with what kind of information each part expects and you and your partner/friend may fill the one on page 3.



