



REFRAME

Reframe Practice Guide

When the Story Starts to Shift

A Renovi Flow Practice Guide from
Renovi Relational Therapy

Dr. Trevor Hislop

The moment matters. The meaning we make of it matters too.

A guided practice for noticing the story beneath your reaction, understanding its history, and choosing a truer, more connected frame.

Purpose

Reframe is the third movement of the Renovi Flow. Reveal helps us name what is true beneath the surface. Remember helps us recognize where our patterns and protections came from. Reframe helps us examine the meaning we attached to a present moment and make room for a fuller, truer story.

Reframe is not denial, minimizing, positive thinking, or talking yourself out of pain. It does not erase what happened. It helps you distinguish the facts of the present from the conclusions, predictions, and old meanings that can rush in around them.

Sometimes the present moment really is painful. Sometimes something needs to be named, repaired, or bounded. Reframing does not ask you to ignore reality. It asks you to become curious about the lens through which you are seeing it.

The big idea

In relationships, it is rarely only about what happened. It is also about what we made it mean.

The Reframe Practice

Pause -> Name -> Trace -> Reframe -> Choose

Move slowly. A frame that has protected you for years will not shift through pressure or shame. Curiosity, compassion, and truth create space for a new response.

1

PAUSE

Notice when the intensity of your response may be asking for attention.

What is happening in me right now?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Tight chest | ☐ Racing thoughts | ☐ Stomach drop |
| ☐ Heat or flushing | ☐ Urge to defend | ☐ Urge to withdraw |
| ☐ Numbness | ☐ Shame | ☐ Anger |
| ☐ Fear | ☐ Sadness | ☐ Other: _____ |

A helpful sentence: "My reaction feels important. I want to slow down before I decide what this moment means."

Separate what happened from the story your mind began to tell.

What happened?

Describe only what a camera or microphone could have recorded. Leave out motives, labels, and conclusions.

What did I make it mean?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ They do not care. | ☐ I am failing. |
| ☐ I am not safe. | ☐ I am too much. |
| ☐ I am not enough. | ☐ I will be rejected. |
| ☐ I am alone. | ☐ My voice does not matter. |
| ☐ I have to fix this. | ☐ I have to protect myself. |
| ☐ This will never change. | ☐ Other: _____ |

The first story that came online was:

What did that story lead me to expect?

What did that story lead me to do?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Pursue | ☐ Withdraw |
| ☐ Defend | ☐ Attack |
| ☐ Fix | ☐ Freeze |
| ☐ Perform | ☐ Keep the peace |
| ☐ Shut down | ☐ Control |

What did my response protect me from feeling, needing, or risking?

A HELPFUL CLUE

"If it's hysterical, it's historical."

This phrase is not a diagnosis, and it does not mean that every strong emotion is wrong or that present pain is imaginary. Sometimes the moment in front of you truly is painful, unsafe, dismissive, or unjust.

But when the reaction feels larger than the moment, when the intensity seems disproportionate, or when you respond in ways that do not fit who you want to be, it may be worth asking:

What history might be showing up here?

Your nervous system can respond to what the moment resembles, not only to what the moment is. A tone, silence, delay, expression, or piece of feedback can activate a story that was formed long before this relationship or conversation.

1

THE MOMENT

What happened here and now?

2

THE MEANING

What did I make this moment mean about me, you, or our relationship?

3

THE HISTORY

What older experience, expectation, or protective pattern does this resemble?

THE INVITATION: Honor the history. Test the meaning. Return to the present.

The goal is not to shame the old story. It likely helped you survive, belong, or make sense of something difficult. The goal is to ask whether it is the only story available now.

3

TRACE

Notice where this meaning may have been learned or reinforced.

You do not need a perfect memory or a dramatic origin story. Look for echoes, patterns, familiar roles, and repeated expectations.

When have I felt this way before?

What did I learn then about myself?

What did I learn about other people or relationships?

What did I learn I had to do to stay safe, connected, accepted, or in control?

Complete the pattern

When I notice...	I tend to believe...	So I protect myself by...

Remember: Understanding where a frame came from is not the same as being controlled by it. Compassion for your history can create freedom in the present.

A healthy reframe is believable. It does not force certainty or excuse harm. It expands the frame to include context, present evidence, your own agency, and the possibility of connection.

Test the old frame

What evidence supports the story I told myself?

What evidence does not fit the story, or suggests another possibility?

What information am I missing?

What could I ask instead of assume?

Widen the frame

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ There may be more than one explanation. | ☐ Their behavior is not the measure of my worth. |
| ☐ I can be hurt and still stay grounded. | ☐ I can seek clarity before reaching a conclusion. |
| ☐ The past may be present, but it is not the whole present. | ☐ I can name a need without demanding an outcome. |
| ☐ I can set a boundary without abandoning connection. | ☐ I have choices now that I did not have then. |

The fuller and more faithful story might be:

From Old Frame to New Frame

Practice replacing certainty about another person's intent with grounded curiosity. The new frame should make room for both truth and connection.

OLD FRAME	A FULLER FRAME
"They do not care about me."	"I felt unimportant when they did not respond. I do not yet know what their silence means, and I can ask."
"Feedback means I am failing."	"Feedback activates an old fear of not being enough. I can listen for what is useful without turning it into a verdict on my worth."
"Their emotion means I am in danger."	"Their intensity affects me, and I can stay aware of my body, ask for a pause, and choose what safety requires."
"If they are disappointed, I have to fix it."	"I can care about their disappointment without taking responsibility for every feeling or outcome."
"Conflict means the relationship is breaking."	"Conflict signals disconnection that may need care. A hard moment can become an invitation to clarity and repair."

Try your own

The old frame says:

A fuller frame is:

5

CHOOSE

Let the new frame shape a more connected response.

Reframing becomes relational when it changes what you do next. Ask what wisdom, love, honesty, and safety invite from you now.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Ask a clarifying question. | ☐ Share what happened inside me. |
| ☐ Take ownership for my reaction. | ☐ Make a clear request. |
| ☐ Set a needed boundary. | ☐ Offer compassion to myself. |
| ☐ Pause and regulate before returning. | ☐ Invite repair. |
| ☐ Seek trusted or professional support. | ☐ Pray and listen before acting. |

A connected response

Observation: "When _____ happened..." Experience: "I noticed I felt _____..."

Use this sequence: name the observation, describe your experience, acknowledge the old story, state the fuller frame, and make a clear invitation.

Write your response in your own words:

Before you act

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Am I grounded enough to stay curious? | ☐ Am I treating my story as a fact? |
| ☐ Can I own my experience without assigning intent? | ☐ Is a boundary, repair, or support needed? |

Reframe does not require you to stay in an unsafe conversation. If there is coercion, abuse, threat, or ongoing harm, prioritize safety and qualified support.

Closing Reflection

Take a quiet moment. You are not trying to force a positive interpretation. You are practicing the freedom to see the present more clearly and respond with intention.

What old story most often shapes the way I interpret disconnection?

What does that story need from me: compassion, truth, grief, reassurance, a boundary, or support?

What present evidence helps me remember that the old story is not the whole story?

What is one reframe I want to rehearse this week?

A brief prayer

God, help me honor what my history has taught me without letting it speak the final word. Give me courage to face what is true, wisdom to question what I assume, and grace to choose connection where connection is possible.

Reframe does not change the facts. It changes the lens through which we meet them. The past may explain the frame. It does not have to determine the response.