

The DISCONNECT CYCLE 2

This week we want to start implementing this practice of being each other's partner, helping to co-regulate this process in the brain for one another. To do this, we have to work together to understand each of your family of origin circumstances that may affect how you react to conflict.

Remember, our amygdala in the back of our brain is like a hard drive, storing emotional experiences and reacting in a protective manner when we feel threatened. These feelings are very deep and it is very helpful in our relationships to take time and discover our own **triggers**.

As husband and wife, we can then work as a united team to help **co-regulate** each other when these triggers are set off. The Executive Center of the brain can help to release the trigger and find resolution together for any conflict we might encounter together.

Each of you should bring your homework from last week, and go through the questions below. Allow each person to talk about their experiences as a child, and ask probing questions to help them better remember things that may now be causing triggers. Do not judge each other or belittle each other in this. Affirm one another as many of our experiences were not choices but situations we just found ourselves in.

ACTION STEPS WEEK THREE (do this Homework together):

STEP ONE:

Share what you wrote down last week with one another. During the time that you are sharing, take notice of when your body begins experiencing any visceral sensations (i.e., chest tightening, lump in throat, "sucker punch stomach", heart rate increases, etc.). When did this happen? Where in your body did you feel it?

STEP TWO:

Consider this: does this same visceral sensation happen at any time in your marriage today? Does it happen at a point where the same stories in your head or patterns happen that are similar to what you described from your family of origin? If so, what are these commonalities?

STEP THREE:

List and share these areas of sensitivity/vulnerabilities for each of you. These are typically when your "Amy" (amygdala) comes out to play, your back brain is activated, and you go into fight, flight, or freeze protection mode. Remember, our bodies respond to emotional threats equally the same as physical threats. We carry emotional memories of pain to self-protect. These are the emotional vulnerabilities we carry with us from childhood into our romantic partnerships.

1. _____

ACTION STEPS WEEK THREE (continued):

HERS

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP FOUR:

Share what you've written on Mapping Your Fight Cycle (Separate Sheet, printed last week). Be sure to find compassion for one another in this. Choose a name, together, for your particular cycle. Remember: **the cycle** is your enemy, not your spouse!

STEP FIVE:

Print Two copies of Mapping Your Disconnect Cycle and work on them together (it's ok to start this assignment individually, then come together to complete).

STEP SIX:

End your time **praying together** for healing of these emotional triggers and for God to give you greater unity as you work together as co-regulators in your marriage.

REMINDER: Continue your mindset exercise from Module 1 every day to help shift your perspective!