



"Attachment"... It's very helpful when we understand that the same biological mechanism God created in our brains to keep a caregiver and child bonded for survival is the same mechanism that transfers to our romantic partnerships – **attachment**. It's also helpful to understand that we **WILL** protest when we don't feel well attached to each other.

In order to understand ourselves and our spouse, it's helpful to look back to the family in which we grew up. While many of us want to avoid this process, I guarantee that it is helpful. Please take the time and care to do the work, since much of the rest of this time together will build upon it. Don't worry – it's a hopeful experience, not a time for parent-bashing or shame.

The purpose in doing this is merely to discover our unique areas of sensitivities and vulnerabilities – the **triggers** that activate our emotional memory center (amygdala) as adults.

Walking through the process of acceptance and possibly forgiveness of our parents' shortcomings may be something that's needed. Most parents do the best they can with what they have and don't intentionally miss the mark. This exercise is about us and not them; it is taking inventory for self-responsibility.

While there may have been many great and wonderful things about your parents and your childhood, for the sake of this exercise we are trying to highlight the pain-points only.

ACTION STEPS WEEK TWO:

We are going to take the next two weeks for this process of uncovering patterns that are getting in the way of healthy communication and mapping your fight cycle. The first part will be about this attachment mechanism that is often tied to situations related to growing up in our particular family of origin:

STEP ONE:

Thinking back on your childhood:

Were there times you felt unloved or unaccepted by your parents? Yes _____ No _____

Were there times you felt your parents were not available for you or responsive to you? _____

If so, describe one or two examples of how and when this occurred:

ACTION STEPS WEEK TWO (continued):

STEP TWO:

What did you tell yourself about this at the time? How did you make sense of it, as a child?

STEP THREE:

Now, fill in these blanks. Do some for each parent/primary caregiver. Here is an example: My father worked a lot and usually came home tired and in a bad mood so that must have meant he didn't want to be disturbed so that meant I was not seen or heard.

My father/mother _____
so that must have meant _____
so that meant I _____

My father/mother _____
so that must have meant _____
so that meant I _____

My father/mother _____
so that must have meant _____
so that meant I _____

My father/mother _____
so that must have meant _____
so that meant I _____

My father/mother _____
so that must have meant _____
so that meant I _____

Be prepared to share these with your spouse. Please find self-compassion (not pity) as well. Lastly, you have a heavenly Father who was present for all these events, so He too can hold your pain with you.

ACTION STEPS WEEK TWO (continued):

STEP FOUR

Print out at least two copies of “Mapping Your Fight Cycle” (separate download, one for each of you) and individually fill them in this week. Take your time with this, thinking back to some common triggers or repeated fights.

If you happen to have an actual fight/trigger this week, be sure to do what Pastor Greg and Dr. Shannon said to do: **Map It!**

STEP FIVE:

End your time praying for healing of these emotional triggers and for God to give you and your spouse 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!