

Our Relationship Cycle¹³

Feelings: When I am upset by you, when we are not getting along, I feel...

- Aggressive
- Alone
- Angry
- Annoyed
- Attacked
- Bitter
- Disappointed
- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Ignored
- Justified
- Resentful
- Sad
- Scared
- Unappreciated
- Victimized
- _____

Behaviors: What I then do is...

- Criticize you
- Blame you
- Interrupt you
- Manipulate you
- Say mean things to you
- Beg or plead
- Demand
- Try to make you feel bad
- Withdraw or run away
- Refuse to talk to you
- Tell you how irrational you are
- Defend myself
- Try to make you happy or less upset
- Justify my feelings and behaviors
- _____

I behave this way in the hope that (what I long for is)...

...you will...

...I will...

...and/or we will...

But, when I behave this way toward you, you respond by (behaviors)...

When you do that, I feel (feelings)...

What I then do is (behaviors)...

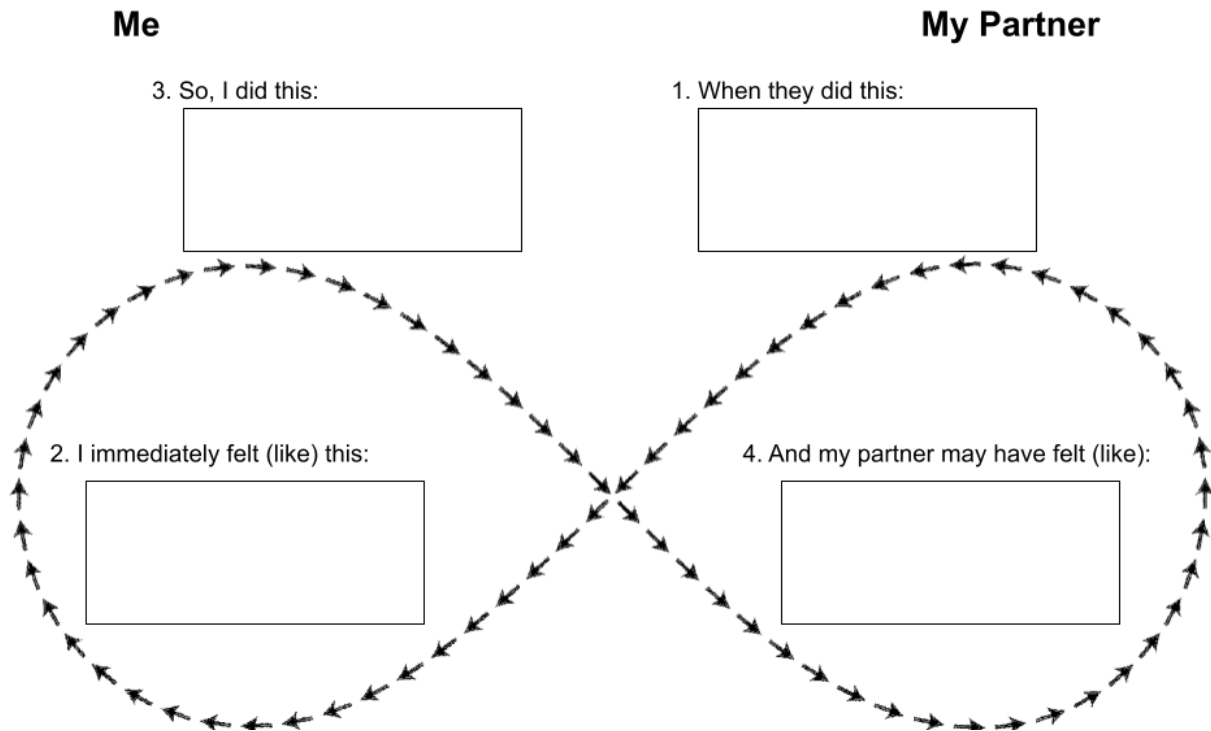
¹³ Adapted from Cloud, H., & Townsend, J. (2008). *Boundaries: When to say yes, how to say no.*; Ferguson, D. (2011) *Center for Relational Leadership*; Johnson, S. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*

Our Relationship Cycle (cont)¹⁴

Discuss the patterns of your relationship.

Recall a recent argument/disagreement/time you felt frustrated with your partner.

Briefly fill in each blank, beginning with "1":



Which pattern(s) does this most resemble?

- Pursue-Withdraw Cycle:** "We can't resolve arguments because discussing them is too painful."
- Blame-Blame Cycle:** "Our arguments escalate quickly, and we don't seem to hear each other."
- Tension-Avoidance Cycle:** "It doesn't matter what we do... we will always stay disconnected."

If you feel comfortable, share your diagram with your partner.

¹⁴ Stan Tatkin, M. (2018). *We do: Saying yes to a relationship of depth, true connection, and enduring love.* Sounds True.; Nagler, J. (2018). *Naked marriage: How to have a lifetime of love, sex, joy, and happiness.* Simon & Schuster.; Johnson, S. (2011). *Hold me tight: Your guide to the most successful approach to building loving relationships.* Hachette UK.