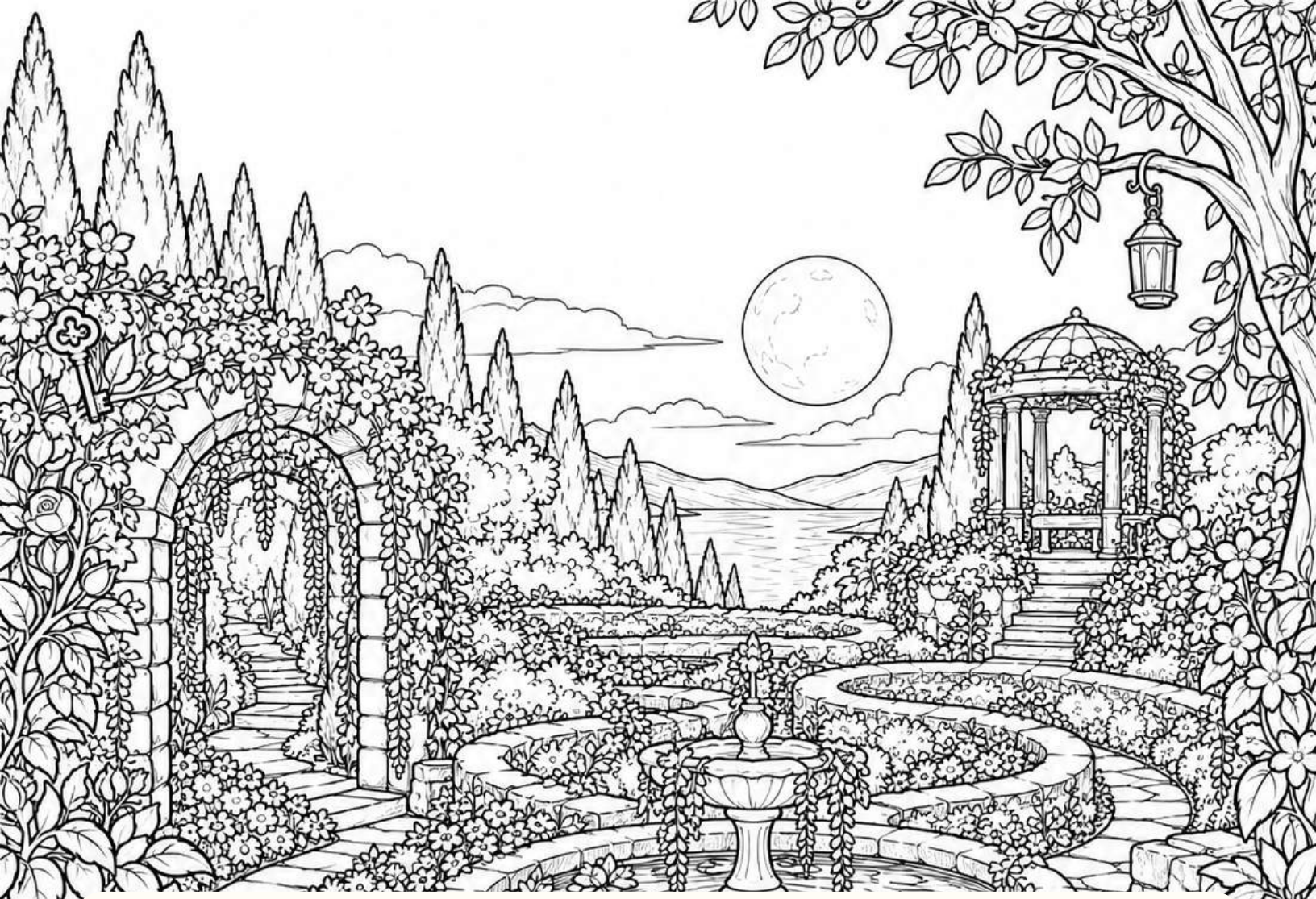


Fight Fair Connection And Repair Workbook

A gentle way to use this resource

Begin anywhere. Read one section at a time, choose only what fits, and skip, adapt, pause, or stop as needed. Try one practice before adding another. Reflection is an invitation, not a requirement.

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | My Reflective Collective

Educational wellness material. Not therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, crisis care, or a substitute for individualized professional support.



Before you begin

Take a moment to notice where you are starting. There is no correct answer and no requirement to complete every prompt.

What is most present?	What would feel supportive?
[ ] Tension or restlessness [ ] Heavy emotion [ ] Numbness or shutdown [ ] Racing thoughts [ ] Low energy [ ] Something else: _____	[ ] More steadiness [ ] More clarity [ ] Comfort or rest [ ] A practical next step [ ] Connection or support [ ] Something else: _____

A simple rhythm

1. Notice	Name what is happening without judging it.
2. Choose	Select one prompt or practice that fits your energy and circumstances.
3. Try	Use it gently for a clear amount of time. Smaller still counts.
4. Check	Notice whether you feel even slightly steadier, clearer, safer, or less alone.

Low-energy option

Read only the headings. Circle or note one sentence that feels useful. Then choose one action that takes five minutes or less. You can return later; stopping is allowed.

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

A printable reflection and practice resource

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

CONNECTION & REPAIR

A practical workbook for fair conflict, meaningful accountability, and fewer fights For partners learning to slow the cycle, speak without blame, and reconnect without relying on the word "sorry." Inclusive language note: This workbook uses gender-neutral terms such as "partner," "they," and Partner

A/Partner B. It is designed for

partners of all genders, orientations, identities, and relationship structures when the exercises fit their agreements and circumstances.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | MyReflectiveCollective.com

The goal Not "never disagree." The goal is to prevent unnecessary escalation, make conflict safer and shorter, understand what each person needs, and repair what happened in a way both people can recognize.

Names: _____ Date started: _____ Therapist/coach: _____ How to use this workbook Choose one or two pages per week. Practice the scripts during calm moments first.

_____ _____ During a real conflict, use only the shortest tools: pause, code word, regulate, return, and repair.

Important safety boundary This workbook is for conflict between partners who can both speak freely and respect a stop signal. If either person is afraid, controlled, threatened, stalked, coerced, or harmed, "better communication" is not the solution. Seek individual, confidential support. In the U.S., the National Domestic Violence Hotline is 800-799-SAFE, text START to 88788, or visit thehotline.org. For immediate danger call emergency services.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 1

If in crisis (U.S.): call or text 988. Immediate danger: call 911.

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

1. The cycle is the enemy-not either partner

Most recurring fights have a predictable loop. One person's protection activates the other person's protection.

Mapping the loop makes it possible to interrupt it without assigning one person all the blame.

Trigger / moment Partner A's inside experience Partner B's inside experience What happened?

_____

_____

Body signals

Meaning my mind made

Protective move I used

How that landed

What I needed underneath

Our cycle in one sentence When _____ happens, I _____, then you _____, and we both end _____ _____ up feeling _____. _____ _____ _____ Name the cycle-not the person _____ _____ (cid:127) "The prove-it / shut-down loop is here." (cid:127) "We are in the apology / rejection loop." (cid:127) "The pursue / protect cycle just took over." (cid:127) "Same team. The pattern is the problem."

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 2

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

2. "Sorry" is only one tool

An apology word can be comforting to one person and loaded, empty, or unsafe to another. Neither reaction is morally superior. The couple can build a shared repair language that communicates what the word was supposed to do.

Repair

What it communicates Example without "sorry"

_____ _____ component Notice I see what happened. "I interrupted you twice."

_____ _____ Impact Your experience matters. "That left you feeling dismissed." Ownership I own my part without excuses. "That was my choice, and it was not okay." Care The bond matters to me. "I care that this hurt you." Correction I will act differently. "Next time I will pause and let you finish." Amends I will address the consequence. "I will handle the call and correct the information." Invitation You have a voice in repair. "What would help now: listening, space, or a concrete fix?" Shared rule No one must use a trauma-loaded word. No one gets to use that history to avoid accountability.

The standard is recognizable repair: notice + impact + ownership + next action.

Words that work for us

_____ _____ _____

_____

_____

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 3

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

3. Replacing reflexive apologies with self-validation

Over-apologizing often appears when a person senses disconnection and urgently wants reassurance, safety, or

permission to have feelings. The practice is not to suppress the feeling. It is to pause long enough to identify and validate it before choosing what to say.

The 10-second inner sequence

1. Notice the urge: "I want to say sorry right now."

2. Name the feeling: hurt, scared, ashamed, confused, angry, lonely,

overwhelmed.

3. Name the need: reassurance, understanding, respect, closeness, time, clarity,

or repair.

4. Validate: "It makes sense that I feel this because _____."

5. Choose: request, boundary, ownership, appreciation, or silence.

Instead of... Try internally... Then say aloud... "Sorry I'm upset." "My emotion is information, not wrongdoing." "I'm upset and I want to explain why." "Sorry for bringing "My concern deserves a respectful time and "Is now a workable time for a 15-minute conversation?" this up." place."

"Sorry, I'm too

"I am activated and still worthy of care." "I need a slower pace and a softer tone." much." "Their emotion is theirs; I can stay present "Sorry you're mad." "I see you're angry. I can listen if we stay respectful." without taking all blame." "Sorry" after a real "I can own behavior without attacking myself." "I did X. It affected you in Y way. I will do Z." misstep

My most common apology trigger is:

_____

_____

What I am usually hoping to receive is:

_____

_____

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 4

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

4. Validation without agreement

Validation means "your experience makes sense from where you stand." It does not mean agreement, surrender, admitting intent, or taking responsibility for everything.

Step Partner's script

1. Reflect "What I hear is…"

2. Name emotion "You seem hurt / frustrated / worried. Did I get that right?"

3. Link to meaning "Given that you thought _____, I understand why that landed

that way."

4. Clarify "What part feels most important for me to understand?"

5. Respond "My view is different, and I want to share it after I understand yours."

Avoid these counterfeit forms (cid:127) "I'm sorry you feel that way." (cid:127) "I hear you, but…" followed by a rebuttal. (cid:127) Explaining intent before acknowledging impact. (cid:127) Demanding evidence that the emotion is justified. (cid:127) Using validation as a trick to end the conversation.

Practice

One person speaks for 90 seconds. The listener may only reflect, name emotion, and ask one curious

question. Then

switch. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

5. The fair-conflict agreement

Check every agreement both partners consent to. Rewrite any item that does not fit.

_____
_____

- We discuss one issue at a time.
- We use specific examples, not "always," "never," or character labels.
- We do not insult, mock, diagnose, threaten, intimidate, or use contempt.
- We do not yell across rooms, block exits, follow someone who requested space, or touch during conflict without consent.
- Either person may call a timeout. The other person honors it.

- The person calling time returns at the agreed time; a timeout is not abandonment.
- We do not use vulnerable disclosures, family trauma, therapy content, or secrets as weapons.
- We distinguish intent from impact. Both can be true.
- We each own our behavior; neither person must absorb all responsibility to restore peace.
- We do not demand immediate forgiveness, affection, sex, or emotional resolution.
- We protect sleep: no high-stakes conflict after _____ p.m.
- We repair within _____ hours when possible, and tell each other if more time is needed.

Our non-negotiable additions

_____
_____
_____
_____ Partner A signature: _____ Partner B signature: _____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

6. Six timeout plans and code words

A useful timeout has four parts: a neutral signal, reassurance, a regulation plan, and a specific return time.

Choose

one primary plan and one backup.

Code word / signal Meaning Exact return script YELLOW Slow down; lower voices; one speaker at a time. "Yellow. I want to stay with this, more slowly." PIT STOP Pause for 20-30 minutes to regulate. "Pit stop. I care about this. Let's resume at ___."

SAME TEAM Stop blame; each names the shared problem. "Same team. The cycle is taking over." SAVE DRAFT No more solving now; write notes and schedule it. "Save draft. Tomorrow at ___ for 20 minutes?" PORCH LIGHT Reassurance without discussion. "We are connected. I need quiet before words." "I saw the signal. We pause now and check in at RESET HAND Silent hand-to-heart gesture; stop immediately. ___." Our chosen code word: _____ Backup: _____ Minimum pause: _____ minutes Maximum before a check-in: _____ hours Return place/time: _____ During the pause, we may (cid:127) Walk, breathe with a longer exhale, stretch, shower, listen to calming audio, journal facts/feelings/needs, or use temperature/sensory grounding.

During the pause, we will not (cid:127) Draft attacks, recruit allies, post online, drink/use substances to numb, drive aggressively, punish with silence, or keep arguing by text.

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

7. Timeout cards

Card A - short pause "I am getting flooded. I care about you and this topic. I need 25 minutes to regulate. I will come back at _____. Please do not follow or text about the conflict during the pause." Card B - longer reset "I cannot do this constructively tonight. I am not ending the relationship or refusing the issue. I will check in by _____ and propose a time within 24 hours." Card C - reassurance only "We are okay enough to pause. I am not ready to solve it, but I can offer: a hand squeeze / a glass of water / 'I love you' / quiet company." Card D - missed return "I said I would return and I missed the time. That can feel abandoning. I am checking in now. I need until _____, and I will set an alarm." Card E - unsafe tone "I want to hear you, and I will not continue while there is yelling, insult, intimidation, or blocking. I am moving to a safe place. We can revisit only when it is respectful."

Personal regulation menu

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

8. A 15-minute conflict conversation

Minutes Task Rules

0-2 Set the container One topic. Define the desired outcome: understanding, decision, or plan. 2-5 Partner A speaks Observation fi feeling fi meaning fi request. No interruption. 5-7 Partner B reflects Summarize until A says, "Yes, that is what I mean." 7-10 Partner B speaks Same sequence. A reflects. 10-13 Find overlap Name one valid point each and one shared goal. 13-15 Choose next step One small, observable action. Schedule follow-up if needed.

Gentle opening formula

Script "When [specific, observable event] happened, I felt [emotion]. The story my mind told was [meaning].

What I need is [need]. Would you be willing to [specific request]?"

_____
_____ Example: "When the conversation ended while I was still speaking, I felt dismissed. The story I told myself was that my feelings did not matter. I need acknowledgment and a clear pause. Would you say when you need a break and when you will return?"

_____
_____

Our topic:

_____

_____

Our shared goal:

_____

_____

One next action each:

_____

_____

_____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

9. Listening when you cannot say "sorry"

Choose a response from each column. A complete repair does not require the prohibited word; it does require engagement.

Acknowledge Own Act

"Next time I will ask for a pause before I "I can see this mattered." "I interrupted and became sharp." snap." "My intent was different, but the impact is "I will check in after a timeout instead of "That landed as rejection." real." disappearing." "You wanted comfort first." "I went straight to problem-solving." "I will ask: comfort, listening, or ideas?" "I understand why trust dipped." "I did not follow through." "I will put it on the calendar now." "Your feeling makes sense." "This part belongs to me." "I will repair the consequence by _____."

The response that feels most genuine to the partner who avoids "sorry":

_____

_____

_____

What helps the other partner recognize repair as sincere:

_____

_____

_____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

10. Ownership without over-owning

Mine to own Not mine to own My words, tone, timing, choices, broken agreements, and My partner's entire emotional history, interpretations, choices, or follow-through. regulation.

The impact I can reasonably recognize. Preventing every uncomfortable emotion.

Making amends for my part. Confessing to things I do not believe I did.

Stating boundaries respectfully. Giving up a boundary to prove love.

Returning after a timeout. Forcing resolution before either person is ready.

The responsibility pie

Without debating percentages, list every contributor: stress, timing, misunderstanding, behavior, history, unmet expectation, and outside pressure. Include both partners and context.

Contributor What happened One change available

Partner A

Partner B

Timing/context

Old wound/trigger

System/practical issue

Check If one person consistently receives nearly 100% of the blame, slow down with the therapist.

Over-functioning by one partner can hide under-responsibility by the other.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 11

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

11. Repair menu: more than 30 alternatives

Circle the phrases that feel usable. Cross out those that sound false or activating.

During the conflict After the conflict "Can I start that sentence again?" "I have thought about my part." "My tone is getting sharp." "Here is what I understand now."

"I agree with this part…" "I care about the impact." "I am defensive; give me ten seconds." "I want to make this right through action." "You are not my enemy." "What consequence can I help repair?" "I need comfort before solutions." "I will follow up on _____ by _____." "Please reflect before responding." "What do you need me to remember next time?" "That came out as blame." "I appreciate that you stayed with the conversation." "We are on the same team." "I do not need instant forgiveness." "I need a timeout, not an exit." "Can we reconnect gently even if this is not solved?" "Your view matters even when mine differs." "I see the effort you made." "Can we lower the intensity by 20%?" "Let's check whether the repair landed." "One issue at a time." "I will not repeat or weaponize what you shared." "I am listening." "The new plan is _____." "Tell me the headline first." "Thank you for telling me directly."

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

12. The repair check

A repair attempt is an offer; it is not automatically successful. The receiver may need something different. Use this page without shaming the attempt or demanding immediate acceptance.

Question Partner A Partner B

What do I believe happened?

What impact do I recognize?

What part do I own?

What do I need to feel understood?

What action would matter?

What can I genuinely offer?

What is unresolved?

Receiver's response options

(cid:127) "That landed. Thank you." (cid:127) "I see the effort. I need more acknowledgment of _____." (cid:127) "I am not ready to receive this yet. Please check back at _____." (cid:127) "The words are not enough yet; follow-through on _____ will help."

(cid:127) "I accept the repair, and I still have feelings."

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

13. Preventing the fight before it starts

- Hold a 10-minute daily check-in: stress level, one feeling, one need, one appreciation.
- Schedule hard topics instead of ambushing each other.
- Use a 0-10 activation scale; pause at 6, not 10.
- Ask "comfort, listening, ideas, or action?" before responding.
- Make requests observable and time-limited.
- Protect sleep, meals, medication routines, sobriety, and transition time.
- Create separate rules for text: logistics only during conflict.
- Keep a weekly "small irritations" meeting so resentment does not accumulate.
- Name one thing that went well before raising a complaint.
- Do not begin conflict when either person is driving, trapped, intoxicated, or caring for children.

- Build non-conflict connection: affection, play, shared rituals, and appreciation.

- Review agreements after a calm week, not only after a blowup.

Our weekly relationship meeting Day/time: _____ Duration: _____ Place: _____ Agenda: appreciations fi logistics fi one concern each fi connection plan fi confirm follow-through.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 14

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

14. Weekly practice tracker

Code word / timeout Day Urge to apologize: trigger + need Validation or repair used What helped used

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

End-of-week review

One moment we interrupted the cycle:

_____
_____

One repair that landed:

_____
_____

One pattern to bring to therapy:

_____
_____

One appreciation for each other:

_____

_____

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 15

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

15. When the tools do not work

Pause the workbook and seek individualized help when:

(cid:127) Timeouts are ignored, mocked, or punished. (cid:127) One person cannot safely disagree or set a boundary. (cid:127) There are threats of self-harm, harm to others, property destruction, stalking, sexual coercion, financial control, or physical intimidation. (cid:127) Alcohol or drug use repeatedly drives unsafe conflict.

(cid:127) Arguments are escalating in frequency or severity. (cid:127) One person weaponizes therapy language or disclosures. (cid:127) There is no reliable return after timeouts and silence becomes punishment.

Safety note Couples communication work assumes basic safety and freedom. The National Domestic

Violence

Hotline advises against couples counseling when abuse is present because abuse is not a mutual

communication problem. Seek confidential individual support and safety planning. In the U.S.:

800-799-SAFE, text START to 88788, thehotline.org. For emotional crisis or suicide concerns, call/text 988. In immediate danger, call emergency services.

Therapist discussion notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 16

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

16. Resources: books, workbooks, podcasts, and tools

Use resources as practice aids, not as weapons or proof that one partner is "right." Choose one item together and discuss one takeaway at a time.

Books and workbooks

(cid:127) The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work - John Gottman & Nan Silver. Practical friendship, conflict-management, and shared-meaning exercises. gottman.com (cid:127) Fight Right - Julie Schwartz Gottman & John Gottman. Conflict patterns and healthier ways to disagree. (cid:127) Hold Me Tight - Sue Johnson. Attachment-focused conversations for understanding the need beneath the fight. iceeft.com

(cid:127) The Hold Me Tight Workbook - Sue Johnson. Structured companion exercises for couples. iceeft.com (cid:127) Us - Terrence Real. Relational accountability, self-protection, and moving from "you and me" to "us." (cid:127) Nonviolent Communication - Marshall B. Rosenberg. Observation, feeling, need, and request language. (cid:127) The High-Conflict Couple - Alan E. Fruzzetti. DBT-informed emotion regulation and validation skills. (cid:127) Secure Love - Julie Menanno. Attachment cycles and corrective emotional communication. (cid:127) Attached - Amir Levine & Rachel Heller. Accessible attachment overview; discuss fit and limitations with a therapist. (cid:127) Set Boundaries, Find Peace - Nedra Glover Tawwab. Individual boundary clarity and follow-through.

Podcasts and audio learning (cid:127) Where Should We Begin? with Esther Perel. Real-session format; listen for patterns, questions, and reframes. estherperel.com/podcast (cid:127) Small Things Often - The Gottman Institute. Short, practical relationship practices. gottman.com/podcast (cid:127) The Love, Happiness and Success Podcast - Dr. Lisa Marie Bobby. Relationship education and communication topics. (cid:127) Dear Therapists - Lori Gottlieb & Guy Winch. Therapeutic conversations and follow-ups; not exclusively couples. (cid:127) The Couples Therapist Couch - Shane Birkel. Interviews on couples therapy concepts; often clinician-oriented. (cid:127) Foreplay Radio - Laurie Watson & George Faller. Attachment and relationship-cycle discussions; includes sexual topics.

Programs and credible starting points (cid:127) Gottman Couples resources and Conflict First Aid tools - gottman.com/couples (cid:127) ICEEFT "Hold Me Tight" resources and therapist directory - iceeft.com (cid:127) National Domestic Violence Hotline safety planning - thehotline.org/plan-for-safety (cid:127) 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - 988lifeline.org Resource note: Titles are educational, not endorsements for every partnership. Official book and program titles are reproduced as published and may contain words such as "marriage" or "couple." Content involving trauma, abuse,

sex, or infidelity may be activating; review with a clinician when appropriate.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 17

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

17. Our one-page plan

When we notice... We will...

Our early body signs

Our cycle name

Our primary code word

Our timeout length

Our return-time script

Our no-go behaviors

The validation phrase that helps A The validation phrase that helps B A repair without "sorry" Who we contact if we are stuck Our shared commitment We do not have to agree on every fact to protect dignity. We can pause without abandoning, validate without surrendering, own impact without self-erasure, and repair through consistent action.

Partner A: _____ Date: _____ Partner B: _____ Date: _____ Therapist/coach:

_____ Review date: _____

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 18

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | MyReflectiveCollective.com

EDUCATIONAL WELLNESS INFORMATION

Please Read Before Using This Resource

This does not replace therapy or legal advice This workbook is a general educational and self-reflection resource. It is not therapy, diagnosis, treatment, couples counseling, legal advice, domestic violence advocacy, or crisis intervention.

Joint communication is not appropriate for every relationship

Couples or family exercises may be unsafe or ineffective when coercive control, intimidation, stalking, violence, retaliation, or severe manipulation is present. Seek confidential individualized support.

Use care and context Culture, disability, family structure, identity, caregiving, finances, workplace power, and legal obligations affect relationship choices, conflict, boundaries, and repair. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop any activity that does not fit.

Seek appropriate support

Consult qualified professionals about individual mental health, physical health, relationship safety, legal concerns, diagnosis, medication, or treatment. No outcome is promised.

Emergency and crisis needs This PDF and My Reflective Collective do not provide monitored emergency services. Call 911 for an immediate emergency when safe and appropriate. In the United States, call or text 988 for suicide or crisis support. Use qualified local domestic violence or sexual assault resources for confidential safety support.

Created by Michelle D. Elder with AI used as a collaborative drafting and organizing tool. AI-assisted material can contain errors or oversimplifications. This resource is educational and is not personalized professional judgment. other professional relationship. If in crisis (U.S.), call or text 988. For immediate danger, call 911. Last reviewed August 27, 2026.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | MyReflectiveCollective.com

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | 19

SAFETY, PRIVACY & EDUCATIONAL USE

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE - MICHELLE D. ELDER, MSW, LMHC

If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency: Call 911 in the United States or use your local emergency number. For U.S. suicide or mental-health crisis support, call or text 988. For relationship-safety support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit TheHotline.org from a safer device when possible.

Privacy and safer searching If someone may monitor your device, accounts, internet connection, location, downloads, or browser activity, consider using a safer device and a trusted network. Private browsing may reduce locally saved history

but does not make activity invisible. Clearing history can also be noticed. A website Quick Exit button changes the page; it cannot erase browser, download, router, account, employer, school, carrier, or device records. Choose only steps that feel safer in your situation.

Do not store identifying or safety-sensitive answers where another person may find them.

Educational scope and professional limits This resource provides general psychoeducation, reflection, and wellness support. It is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, assessment, treatment, medical advice, legal advice, crisis response, forensic evaluation, or an individualized safety plan.

It does not replace care from a licensed clinician, healthcare professional, attorney, trained advocate, emergency service, or other qualified professional. Laws, court procedures, services, and risks vary by location and circumstance.

Choice, pacing, and inclusion You may skip, change, discuss, dictate, draw, pause, or stop any activity. No exercise can determine what you experienced, diagnose a condition, prove a legal claim, guarantee safety, or tell you whether to stay, leave, report, reconcile, forgive, or pursue court action. Adapt language and activities for culture, identity, disability, neurotype, age, literacy, sensory needs, and personal preference. Automatic translation can make mistakes; confirm legal, medical, emergency, and safety-critical wording with a qualified person.

Copyright and sharing

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC for My Reflective Collective. Free for personal educational use and supportive

discussion. Keep the creator credit and this safety page with the resource when sharing. Do not sell, misrepresent, or present it as individualized clinical or legal advice.

MyReflectiveCollective.com - Pause - Reflect - Learn - Practice

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE - NOT THERAPY OR INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

Immediate danger or medical emergency: call 911 | U.S. crisis support: call or text 988 | Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC

Supportive practices and reminders

Trauma-informed choice

You are in charge of pace, privacy, and participation. Keep your eyes open if that feels safer. Change the words, position, movement, or environment. Skip any prompt that increases distress. You never have to describe a traumatic experience to benefit from grounding or reflection.

A one-minute mindfulness pause

Notice one point of support beneath you. Look around and name three neutral things you see. Notice one sound and one body sensation without trying to change either. Ask, 'What would support me in the next few minutes?' Choose the smallest workable response.

Believable affirmations

Choose language your mind can accept. Try: 'I can take one step at a time.' 'My needs and boundaries matter.' 'I am allowed to pause.' 'I can ask for support.' 'This moment is difficult, and it will not always feel exactly like this.' Edit any statement until it feels honest and respectful.

Practical tips

Pair reflection with water, food, movement, rest, medication as prescribed, or contact with a safe person when needed. Save the most helpful page where it is easy to find. Revisit the resource when you are relatively steady so the choices feel familiar during harder moments.

When more support is appropriate

A worksheet cannot provide emergency care, diagnosis, or individualized treatment. Consider a qualified health or mental-health professional when distress is intense, persistent, worsening, affecting daily functioning, or connected with safety concerns. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services or a crisis service available in your country.

Integrate and choose your next step

Pause after reading. More information is not always more helpful; the goal is to leave with one choice you can actually use.

What stood out?

_____

_____

What is one kind, realistic next step?

_____

_____

What support, boundary, or adaptation would help?

_____

_____

If this did not help

You did not fail. Try making the step smaller, changing from a thinking practice to a body or sensory practice, checking basic needs, or involving a safe person. Strong, persistent, or worsening distress may need professional or crisis support beyond a worksheet.