

Rationale and Instructions for the Review Process

Rationale

One of the hallmark practices of people who acquire more ability to react effectively when upsets happen in their relationships involves meticulously reviewing their own reactions when upsets occur. Mistakes can be a precious resource for learning, yet most people in distressed relationships continue to make the same mistakes over and over again. One of the first abilities acquired by people who are on the road to satisfying relationships is the ability in hindsight to accurately identify exactly where they went wrong in their reactions to their partners.

If you're serious about developing that habits that are predictive of relationship success, consider making this commitment to yourself: From this day forward, do not let a single situation between you and your partner that didn't turn out well go by without squeezing every drop of learning you can get from the situation. *Complete a review scale after every situation that occurs in which you or your partner communicated dissatisfaction with or disapproval of the other's thinking or actions.* Complete a review scale regardless of whether the situation turned out OK or not. Using the review and scales (and charts, if needed), in a relatively short period of time you can develop the ability, in retrospect, to accurately assess where you may have gone off-track in your reactions in any situation that didn't go well between you and your partner.

Review Scales

A crucial part of the assessment process involves your completion of review scales that your therapist will be sending to you via email. These scales are formatted in Microsoft Word. You can complete the scales electronically and attach them via email back to your therapist, or you can print hard copies, complete them and bring them to your next session.

Choosing the appropriate Review Scale

For each situation that you review, your first task is to determine which review scale to use. To do so, ask yourself the following question:

"In this situation, did I communicate dissatisfaction with or disapproval of my partner's thinking or actions first, or did she communicate dissatisfaction with or disapproval of my thinking or actions first?"

Review Scale 1

If you communicated dissatisfaction with or disapproval of your partner's thinking or actions first, use Review Scale 1, unless her conduct involved lying, engaging in deliberate deception, being sexually unfaithful or physically aggressive, breaking a clear agreement with no good reason, badmouthing or undermining you, violating your privacy or personal space or engaging in unilateral decision-making about something she knows you have strong feelings about. If your partner's conduct involved one of these actions, use **Review Scale 3**.

Review Scale 2

If your partner communicated dissatisfaction with or disapproval of your thinking first, use Review Scale 2

Completing a Review Scale

The scale completion process will be more understandable to you if you have one of the review scales to look at as you read this section.

In the white box at the top of the page, please type a brief description of the situation you're reviewing. Then, complete the series of sub-scales that follow. Each sub-scale consists of a row of check boxes and two groups of descriptions below the check boxes, one group to the right and one group to the left. For each sub-scale, decide which group of descriptions fits most closely to what happened in the situation you're reviewing. Check the box above that indicates which set of descriptions below fit best with what happened, and how close the fit is.

The scales look like this:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This side fits much better		This side fits somewhat better		Parts of both sides fit equally well		This side fits somewhat better		This side fits much better	
If the descriptions on this side fit what happened better, check one of the boxes immediately above.					If the descriptions on this side fit what happened better, check one of the boxes immediately above.				

Review Charts

The Review *Scales* are designed to help you evaluate your *first reactions* when you or your partner become dissatisfied with or disapproving of the other's thinking or actions. Most of the time, if your first reactions are effective, dissatisfactions will get resolved. But this won't always be the case. The Review *Charts* will help you track the effectiveness of your reactions in situations where your first reactions are solid, but don't seem to be enough to change the direction of the disagreement between you and your partner. For any situation that occurred between you and your partner where 1) you feel that your first reactions were solid and 2) Your partner continued to be inflexible, closed-minded, critical, defensive or dismissive, consult the appropriate review chart to assess if you continued to react effectively as the discussion between you and your partner progressed. Choose the chart that's appropriate for your situation: *Review Chart 1: You Felt Dissatisfied with or Disapproving of Your Partner's Thinking or Actions First*; *Review Chart 2: Your Partner Communicated Dissatisfaction with or Disapproval of Your Thinking or Actions First*; and *Review Chart 3: Your Partner's Thinking or Actions were Wrong*.

In using the appropriate chart, start the top and ask yourself the questions in first shaded area. If your answer is "yes" to each question, your partner will respond in one of the ways indicated by the arrows. Depending on her response, move on to the next relevant shaded area and ask yourself the set of questions. As long as your answer to each question is yes, follow the arrows indicative of your partner's response to the next shaded area. Continue in this manner down the remainder of the chart. If you answer "yes" to every question from top to bottom of the chart, you are very close to getting more respect and consideration from your partner. But if your answer to any question is "no," you can know that this is the place where you got "off-track" in your reactions to your partner. There's no need to read further down in the chart because once you are off-track, any further attempts to interact

effectively with your partner will be contaminated unless you are able to back up and change your off-track reaction.