Review Chart 2: If Your Partner Got Upset or Expressed Dissatisfaction First

Your partner was upset, but seemed to have at least somewhat of an open mind and seemed willing to listen to your point of view

- Did you avoid thinking things like: "He's over-reacting!" "He shouldn't be upset over something like this!" "He's lost perspective!" ?**[2]**
- Did you assume there may be a reason for his feelings that you didn't fully understand yet? **[2]**
- Did you remind yourself, "Just because I might not feel the same way if I were in his shoes doesn't mean that his feelings are unwarranted." ? **[2]**
- Did you find and acknowledge the at-least-partly understandable reasons why he was upset? **[3]**

- If you were reluctant to make the changes or concessions he wanted, did you let him know why? **[4]**
- Did you assure him that his feelings needed to count just as much as yours and that you were willing to try to find some way to meet in the middle? **[5,6]**

He was flexible and willing to give and take

He was inflexible and unwilling to give and take

Did you express irritation at his attitude and let him know that you didn't expect him to agree with you, but you did expect him to respect your feelings and be willing to give and take?

Your partner seemed to have his mind made up. He implied or said you were wrong

- Did you avoid hitting the panic button and remind yourself that his critical attitude was probably just temporary? **[7]**
- Did you fire a friendly warning shot (Ask and Offer), saying something like:
  - "Stop it! I'm listening!"
  - "Don't! I'm trying to hear what you're talking about!"
  - "Would you stop pissing me off and just tell me what you're upset about?" **[8]**

He seemed less critical

He still seemed critical

Did you express irritation at his attitude and tell him to STOP IT, this time more emphatically? Did you let him know (again) that you were trying to be open to what he was saying, but you expected him to be open and flexible, too? **[8]**

He still seemed critical, dismissive, or inflexible

Did you get angry and let him know if he wanted a fight, you were willing to give it? **[9]**

He was still critical, dismissive or inflexible

Did you let him know he was pissing you off and you didn't want to be around him? **[10]**

He seemed less critical and more willing to listen

When you were alone, did you avoid making a big deal in your mind of how awful his attitude was? (Did you remind yourself things like: "It's natural enough for him to want to have his own way" It's not a crime that he acted this way. He crossed the line, and I let him have it. No harm, no foul.")? **[11]**

Did you begin a new conversation without a chip on your shoulder? Did you refrain from trying to get him to see how "wrong" his behavior was? Did you avoid demanding an apology? Did you simply return to the issue? **[12]**

Copyright to Brent J. Atkinson, All Rights Reserved -- www.thecouplesclinic.com