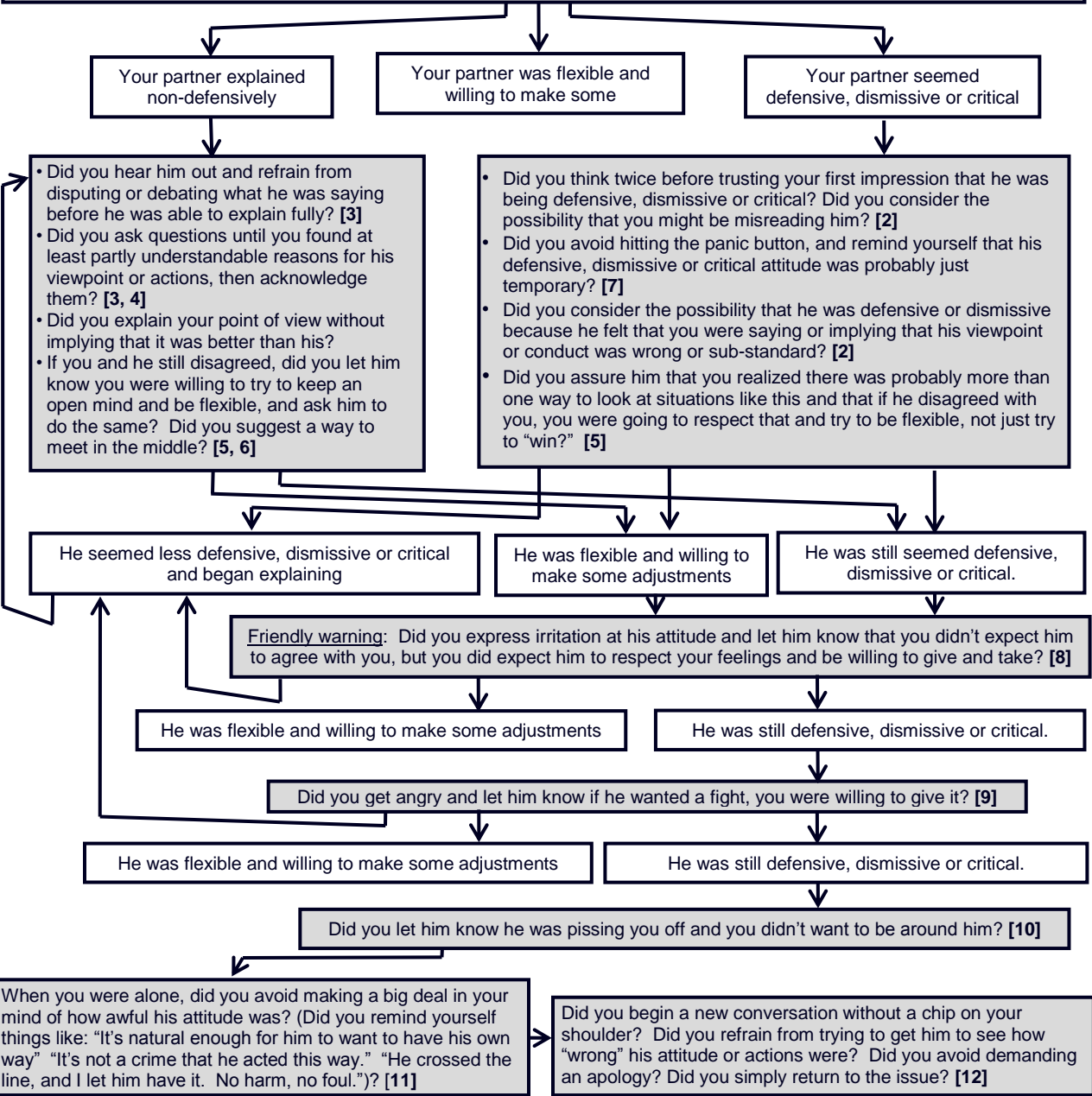


Review Chart 1:
You Felt Dissatisfied with or Disapproving of Your Partner's Thinking or Actions First ***

- If your initial gut reaction was that his thinking or actions were wrong or sub-standard, did you think twice before trusting your reaction? Did you remind yourself that just because you might not have liked how he was thinking or acting didn't mean it was wrong or sub-standard, and if you concluded that his thinking or actions were wrong or sub-standard when they weren't, you'd be reacting exactly like people who rarely get the kind of respect and cooperation from their partners they'd like to have? [2]
- Did you propose to yourself that this may be one of those situations where 1) partners have legitimately different opinions, priorities or expectations 2) they need to be open to the possibility that they could each be biased in favor of their own preferences, 3) they need to be willing to "give and take" when agreements need to be made. [6]
- Did you let him know that you didn't like (or agree with) the way he was thinking or acting, and ask him to either adjust his behavior somewhat or explain why he was thinking or acting this way? Did you convey willingness to be flexible and listen with an open mind? [2]



*** **Note:** If your partner lied, engaged in deliberate deception, was sexually unfaithful, was physically aggressive, broke a clear agreement with no good reason, badmouthed or undermined you, violated your privacy or personal space or engaged in unilateral decision-making about something he knows you have strong feelings about, the questions in *Review Chart 3 (Your Partner's Thinking or Actions Were Wrong)* may be more appropriate. For all other times when you felt dissatisfied or disapproving, use the above questions.

Review Chart 2: Your Partner Communicated Dissatisfaction with or Disapproval of Your Thinking or Actions First

Your partner communicated dissatisfaction or disapproval, but seemed to have at least somewhat of an open mind and seemed willing to listen to your point of view.

Your partner seemed to have his mind made up. He implied or said that your thinking or actions were sub-standard or wrong.

- Did you communicate verbally and/or nonverbally that it was good that he was talking to you about this, he usually has good points, and you were sure he was saying something that you should seriously consider?
- If you saw that he had a good point, did you acknowledge it?
- If your first impression was that his perceptions, reasoning or expectations were "off" (inaccurate, unrealistic, excessive, short-sighted or sub-standard) did you think twice before trusting your first impression? Did you consider that he might have information you didn't have, or that there could be more than one legitimate way to look at situations or issues like this one? [2]
- Did you remember that if you implied that his perceptions, reasoning or expectations were "off" when they arguably weren't, you'd be reacting exactly like people who rarely get the kind of respect and cooperation from their partners they'd like to have?
- Did you remind yourself that letting go of the idea that his perceptions, reasoning or expectations were "off" did not mean that you had to agree or go along with them? (There was likely nothing wrong with yours either, and yours needed to count as much as his.) [6]
- Did you hear him out, refrain from disputing or debating what he was saying before he was able to explain fully, and acknowledge the at-least-partly understandable aspects of his thinking? [2,3]

- Did you think twice before trusting your first impression that he was inflexible? Did you consider the possibility that you could be misreading him? [2]
- Did you avoid hitting the panic button and remind yourself that his critical or dismissive attitude was probably just temporary? [7]
- Did you remind yourself that it's natural enough to see things from one's own perspective and that it wasn't exactly a crime that he was having a hard time keeping an open mind? [7]
- Did you consider that he might be more flexible and/or open-minded if you could assure him that you would be open to what he was saying? [5]
- Did you say something like...
 - "Stop it! I'm listening!"
 - "Don't! I'm trying to hear what you're talking about!"
 - "Don't act like obviously you're right and I'm wrong! I need to feel like you're open to the possibility that there might be good reasons for my opinions or actions. I'll try to be open to your reasoning, too." [8]

- If you couldn't agree with his perspective, or you were reluctant to make the changes he wanted, did you...
- Try to persuade him of the merits of your viewpoint without implying that his was wrong? **and**
 - Assure him that although you still liked your reasoning better, you realized that you could be biased, you were willing to "count" his perspective much as yours, and you were willing to try to find some way to meet in the middle? [5, 6]

He seemed less critical, disapproving or dismissive and more willing to listen to your point of view.

He still seemed critical, disapproving or dismissive

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 was flexible and willing to give and take

He was inflexible and closed minded.

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]

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? [8]

He was still critical, dismissive or inflexible

He seemed less critical and more willing to listen

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

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 attitude was? Did you avoid demanding an apology? Did you simply return to the issue? [12]

Review Chart 3: Your Partner's Thinking or Actions were Wrong

During a Disagreement

The way he treated you during a disagreement was wrong.

(Unless he *lied* or became *violent* during the disagreement, the questions in this chart don't apply. Use Review Chart 1 or 2)

Before a Disagreement

He did something that was wrong, and that's what triggered a disagreement in the first place.

Did you question your initial gut feeling that he was wrong?

- Did you remind yourself that just because you might not have liked how he was thinking or acting didn't mean it was wrong [2], and if you implied that he was wrong when he wasn't, you'd be reacting exactly like people who rarely get the kind of respect and cooperation they'd like to have from their partners?
- Did you consider the possibility that...:
 - ...there might be other sane, healthy people who might not be upset with him if they were in your shoes?
 - ...he wouldn't be upset with you if you acting the way he did? [2]
 - (If either of these seemed possible, it's likely that his behavior wasn't wrong, rather you had legitimately different priorities)
- Was your partner dishonest, sexually disloyal, physically aggressive, or did he fail to keep an agreement, badmouth or undermine you, violate your privacy or make a unilateral decision about something he knows you have strong feelings about? (If not, it's likely that his behavior wasn't wrong, rather you had legitimately different priorities)
- Did you remind yourself that letting go of the idea that he was wrong...
 - ...didn't mean that you shouldn't have been upset. (It's natural to feel upset when you and your partner are at cross purposes.)
 - ...didn't mean you needed to just shut up and let him do whatever he wanted. (There was likely nothing wrong with your wants or needs either, and your feelings needed to count as much as his.)
 - ...didn't mean that you didn't have the right to ask him to make some changes (it just meant that the reason why he needed to be willing to change wasn't because he was wrong but rather because your priorities or expectations were just as legitimate as his, and when you two disagree, he needed to be willing to meet you in the middle.) [6]

After considering the above, you still felt that his thinking or actions were *wrong!*

After considering the above, you realized that maybe he hadn't done anything wrong, but it still really bothered you and you wanted him to change.

The remaining guidelines on this page don't apply. Use the guidelines in Review Charts 1 or 2.

- Did you relax and take your time, assuming that he would understand what he did was wrong if you could avoid implying that he was an awful person for doing it? [2]
- Did you remember that if inside you were feeling disgusted, outraged or indignant about what he did, or in your mind you were making a big deal about how awful he was for doing it, chances were very slim that you'd get him to really care about your feelings and regret what he did?
- If you were feeling disgusted, outraged or indignant, did you try saying to yourself something like...
 - "I need to make it clear that this is wrong and it's not gonna fly with me, but it's not like I necessarily have any room to talk...I've done plenty of dysfunctional things too. I'm not really in a position to act all high and mighty. That doesn't mean I'm gonna just let this slide, it just means I don't have to get all indignant or act like he's a horrible person."
- Having adjusted your attitude, did you explain to him why what he did seemed wrong to you, and ask if he could see why you felt this way?
- If he began offering an explanation for why he acted as he did, rather than disputing details, did you acknowledge anything that made his actions even a little bit more understandable, then let him know that although his behavior was more understandable, you still felt it was wrong and didn't want it to happen again? [6]

He was defensive, dismissive, unapologetic, or tried to change the subject

He understood why you were upset, acknowledged he shouldn't have done it, or said he'd do things differently from now on.

- Did you read the section called "Taking a Firm Stand," page 60-62, in the book, *Developing Habits for Relationship Success*?
- Did you consult a therapist regarding how to best begin taking a firm stand?

The problem was that he'd apologized before, and now he'd done the same type of thing

This was the first time he'd done the thing you were upset about or the first time he'd acknowledged that he shouldn't have done it.

Did you tell him that in order to feel confident that it wouldn't happen again, you'd need to know he was sincere and had a viable plan for change? Did you ask him to explain it to you?

He was upset that you wouldn't just take his word for it, and accused you of being unwilling to accept an apology

He assured you that he was sincere and explained his plan for change non-defensively.

Did you accept his acknowledgement and move on?