

# APPENDIX D1

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## UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEGATIVE CYCLE

Couples get caught in negative “cycles.” A cycle is a repeating pattern of negative behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that causes distress. You react to your partner’s reactions and your partner reacts to your reactions and you go round and round in a never-ending cycle. Understanding and untangling your negative cycles is a first step in climbing out of distress.

To start understanding your negative cycles, answer the following questions. First review and think about the “When We’re Not Getting Along: Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors” checklist to remind yourself of how you feel and interact when you are not getting along with your partner.

*When my partner and I are not getting along:*

I often react by (describe your behaviors)...

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My partner often reacts to me by (describe his/her behaviors)...

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When my partner reacts this way, I often feel...

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When I feel this way I, see myself as...

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When I feel this way I long for or need...

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When I react the way I do, I guess that my partner feels...

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Describe your repeating negative cycle (include how you and your partner trigger each other's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors).

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# APPENDIX D2

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## WHEN WE'RE NOT GETTING ALONG: FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIORS

Check all the statements that reflect the way you feel or what you do when you and your partner are fighting or not getting along. Look back over the list and circle a few to indicate the most important items.

### What I Do

- |                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| I attack               | I criticize |
| I avoid conflict       | I defend    |
| I become cold or aloof | I get quiet |
| I blame                | I leave     |
| I clam up              | I withdraw  |

### What I Feel

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| I feel abandoned                | I feel down or depressed                  |
| I feel afraid                   | I feel empty                              |
| I feel alone or lonely          | I feel flooded with emotion               |
| I feel analyzed                 | I feel frustrated                         |
| I feel angry                    | I feel guarded                            |
| I feel attacked                 | I feel guilty                             |
| I feel blamed or criticized     | I feel hopeless                           |
| I feel blank                    | I feel hurt                               |
| I feel confused                 | I feel like I don't know what I have done |
| I feel controlled               | I feel that I don't matter                |
| I feel disappointed             | I feel that I've failed                   |
| I feel disconnected             | I feel ignored                            |
| I feel discounted               | I feel inadequate                         |
| I feel dismissed or "blown off" | I feel intimidated                        |

I feel invalidated	I feel sad
I feel isolated	I feel scared
I feel like it's always my fault	I feel shut out or pushed away
I feel judged	I feel small or insignificant
I feel let down	I feel smothered
I feel like clinging to my partner	I feel unable to calm myself down
I feel like getting back	I feel unable to focus my thoughts
I feel like protecting myself	I feel unattractive
I feel misunderstood	I feel uncared for or unwanted
I feel my partner is never there for me	I feel unimportant
I feel numb	I feel unlovable
I feel overwhelmed	I feel vulnerable
I feel put down	I feel worried or nervous
I feel rejected	I have trouble putting thoughts into words

### In My Body I Feel

- I feel my heart speeding up
- I feel pressure in my chest
- I feel tense somewhere in my body
- I feel tightness in my throat
- I feel uneasy in my stomach

### How We Interact During Conflict

- During an argument, I become silent, withdraw, and don't want to discuss things.
- I often get angry and critical to get my partner to talk.
- I often want to avoid talking about our relationship.
- I often want to push my partner to talk about our relationship.
- My partner often pushes an issue and won't let it drop.
- My partner withdraws a lot and won't face an issue when I want to talk.

### Other Feelings

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