

FRUSTRATION EXERCISE

Part 1: Identifying your behaviour and desire

I invite you to think of some of some frustration, conflict or tension you are feeling in relation to your partner at present.

Take some time to connect with your irritation or struggle with this person. As you go through the following sentence stems jot down on a piece of paper the first thing that comes to your mind.

“I get frustrated, angry, irritated with _____ (name of person) when they _____.

I interpret this to mean...

And I feel...

At my worst, I react by (= reactive behaviour)...

To hide my fear of

Which reminds me of my childhood wound of ...

When what I really desire is ...

Part 2: Behaviour Change Request

Formulate a clear, specific, realistic, time-referenced, attainable request and ask your partner, will they do this for you. It is important to get a Win-Win here so that the old brain is reprogrammed and the experience is registered as pleasurable. New neutral pathways are then formed. E.g.:

“Once in the next week, when I am upset, will you put your arms around me and mirror back what I say for five minutes then tell me what I am experiencing makes sense and empathise with my feelings.”

“Once in the next fortnight, even if you don’t feel like it, would you agree to initiate sex and focus on what is nice about it for 20 minutes.”