



Identifying and Changing Cycles

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1. Identify your role.

Select which role you occupy and which your partner occupies.

Attachment-related roles

Pursue	Distance
Cling	Push away
Demand/nag	Withdraw
Attack	Defend
Intrude	Wall off

Identity-related roles

Dominate	Submit
Right	Wrong
Lead	Follow
Overfunction	Underfunction
Helpful	Helpless

2. Identify the core, primary, attachment or identity -related feeling that underlies your position.

- If you are feeling the need to pursue your partner for closeness (often by blaming or criticizing), search for underlying feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, and sadness.
- If you are feeling withdrawn because of fear of being overwhelmed, search for underlying feelings of a need for connection or unexpressed resentment.
- If you are feeling dominant (often by being very rational), search for underlying feelings of anxiety or insecurity that are possibly guiding your need to control.
- If you are feeling submissive, search for underlying feelings of inadequacy, fear of anger and unsureness.

3. Identify and express attachment needs for closeness, connectedness, and identity.

- Say “I feel sad, lonely, or afraid.”
- Say “I need you to see me, recognize my needs, boundaries, and preferences.”
- Don’t complain; rather, express your core feelings and needs.

4. Listen to and accept your partner’s feelings and needs.

- Try to understand your partner's experience. Put yourself in your partner's shoes. See things from his or her perspective.
- Communicate your understanding and appreciation of your partner's perspective.