the DNA of RELATIONSHIPS for COUPLES

the fear dance

Step 1: My Core Fear Buttons
(Insert the most important feelings from question 3 on pages 12 & 13.)

_____
_____
_____



Step 2: My Reactions
(Insert the most common coping strategies from question 4 on page 13.)

_____
_____
_____

Step 3: My Spouse's Core Fear Buttons (Insert the most important feelings for my spouse from questions 3 on pages 12 & 13.)

_____
_____
_____

Step 4: My Spouse's Reactions
(Insert my spouse's most common coping strategies from question 4 on page 13.)

_____
_____
_____

Step 5: Discuss how this dance plays out in your conflicts.

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discovering your core fear

1. Describe a recent conflict, argument, or negative situation with your spouse—something that really "pushed your button."

2. How did you feel in response to this conflict or situation? How did that conflict or argument make you feel? Check all that apply - but "star" the most important feelings:

___ Unsure	___ Disappointed	___ Disgusted	___ Embarrassed	___ Other:
___ Apathetic	___ Wearied	___ Resentful	___ Frightened	_____
___ Puzzled	___ Torn up	___ Bitter	___ Anxious	___ Other:
___ Upset	___ Shamed	___ Fed up	___ Horrified	_____
___ Sullen	___ Uncomfortable	___ Frustrated	___ Disturbed	
___ Sad	___ Confused	___ Miserable	___ Furious	
___ Hurt	___ Worried	___ Guilty		

3. How did this conflict make you feel about yourself? What did the conflict say about you? What was the "self" message - the message that it sent to you? What were the "buttons" that got pushed? Circle all that apply, but "star" the most important feeling you felt about yourself.

"As a result of the conflict, I felt..."	What That Feeling Sounds Like
Rejected	My spouse doesn't want me; my spouse doesn't need me; I am not necessary in this relationship; my spouse does not desire me; I feel unwanted.
Abandoned	I will be alone; my spouse will ultimately leave me; I will be left alone to care for myself; my spouse won't be committed to me for life.
Disconnected	We will become emotionally detached or separated.
Like a failure	I am not successful at being a husband/wife; I will not perform right or correctly; I will not live up to expectations; I will fall short in my relationship; I am not good enough.
Helpless/powerless	I cannot do anything to change my spouse or my situation; I do not possess the power, resources, capacity, or ability to get what I want; I will be controlled by my spouse.
Defective	Something is wrong with me; I'm the problem.
Inadequate	I am not capable; I am incompetent.
Inferior	Everyone else is better than I am; I am less valuable or important than others.
Invalidated	Who I am, what I think, what I do, or how I feel is not valued.
Unloved	My spouse doesn't love me anymore; my spouse has no affection or desire for me; my relationship lacks warm attachment, admiration, enthusiasm, or devotion; I feel as if we are just roommates—that there are no romantic feelings between us.
Dissatisfied	I will not experience satisfaction within the relationship; in our marriage, I will exist in misery for the rest of my life; I will not be pleased within my marriage; I feel no joy in my relationship.
Cheated	My spouse will take advantage of me; my spouse will withhold something I need; I won't get what I want.
Worthless/devalued	I am useless; I have no value to my spouse.
Don't measure up	I am never able to meet my spouse's expectations of me; I am not good enough as a spouse.
Unaccepted	My spouse does not accept me; my partner is not pleased with me; my spouse does not approve of me.

Judged	I am always being unfairly judged or misjudged; my spouse forms faulty or negative opinions about me; I am always being evaluated; my spouse does not approve of me.
Humiliated	This marriage is extremely destructive to my self-respect or dignity.
Ignored	My spouse will not pay attention to me; I will be unknown in my marriage; I feel neglected.
Unimportant	I am not important to my mate; I am irrelevant, insignificant, or of little priority to my spouse.
Other:	_____

4. What do you do when you feel _____ [insert the most important feeling from question #3]? How do you react when you feel that way? Identify your common coping strategies to deal with your "buttons" being pushed. Check all that apply—but "star" the most important reactions:

Withdrawal	You avoid others or alienate yourself without resolution; you sulk, use the silent treatment.
Escalation	Your emotions spiral out of control; you argue, raise your voice, fly into a rage.
Earn-it mode	You try to do more to earn others' love and care.
Negative beliefs	You believe your spouse is far worse than is really the case; you attribute negative motives to your spouse.
Blaming	You place responsibility on others, not accepting fault; you're convinced the problem is your spouse's fault.
Exaggeration	You make overstatements or enlarge your words beyond bounds or the truth.
Tantrums	You have a fit of bad temper.
Denial	You refuse to admit the truth or reality.
Invalidation	You devalue your spouse; you do not appreciate who your partner is, what he or she feels or thinks or does.
Defensiveness	Instead of listening, you defend yourself by trying to provide an explanation.
Clinginess	You develop a strong emotional attachment or dependence on your spouse.
Passive-aggression	You display negative emotions, resentment, and aggression in unassertive passive ways, such as procrastination and stubbornness.
Caretaking	You become responsible for others by giving physical or emotional care and support to the point you are doing everything for your spouse and your partner does nothing to care for himself or herself.
Acting out	You engage in negative behaviors or addictions like drug or alcohol abuse, extra-marital affairs, excessive shopping or spending, or overeating.
Fix-it mode	You focus almost exclusively on what is needed to solve the problem.
Complain/criticize	You express unhappiness or make accusations; you present a "laundry list" of faults about your mate.
Striking out	You become verbally or physically aggressive, possibly abusive.
Manipulation	You pursue your mate to get them to do what you want; you control your spouse for your own advantage.
Anger or rage	You display strong feelings of displeasure or violent and uncontrolled emotions.
Catastrophize	You use dramatic, exaggerated expressions to depict that the relationship is in danger or that it has failed.
Emotionally shut down	You numb out emotionally; you become devoid of emotion, or you have no regard for other's needs or troubles.
Humor	You use humor as a way of not dealing with the issue at hand.
Sarcasm	You use negative humor, hurtful words, belittling comments, cutting remarks, or demeaning statements.
Minimization	You assert that your spouse is overreacting to an issue; you intentionally underestimate, down play, or soft pedal the issue.
Rationalization	You attempt to make your actions seem reasonable; you try to attribute your behavior to credible motives; you try to provide believable but untrue reasons for your conduct.
Indifference	You are cold and show no concern.
Abdication	You give away responsibilities.
Self-abandonment	You desert yourself; you neglect you; you run yourself down.
Other:	_____