

**BUILDING A SAFE AND SECURE RELATIONSHIP**  
**Changing Negative Cycles to Positive Cycles**  
**Begins with De-Escalating as a Couple**

**WHEN I AM UPSET BY YOU, WHEN WE ARE NOT GETTING ALONG, I FEEL (some feelings are on the surface, and some are deeper, less conscious feelings):**

Angry, Pissed off	Sad
Alone, Abandoned	Disappointed
Justified in my anger	Like I have to figure this out myself
Frustrated by him/her	Deprived
Annoyed, Irritated	Despairing, Hopeless
Scared, frightened	Like I want to protect myself
Anxious	Hurt, Not heard, Not valued, Not important

***WHAT IF WHEN WE WERE HAVING DIFFICULTY I TOLD YOU THAT....***

I realize we are beginning a negative cycle and that I am contributing to it  
I realize we are a system and I am affecting you  
I would like to be safe and close to you rather than distant, disconnected, alone, and afraid of what will happen  
Our cycle feels like it is present and I want to help alleviate it  
I care about our relationship and I won't do the next thing that hurts or scares you and pulls you deeper into our negative cycle  
I'd love it if you slow down with me so we can reconnect. We can always figure out what to do about the problem later, when we've provided assurance and safety and our physiology has returned to normal.  
If you aren't ready to de-escalate with me as a team, I will anyway because I love you and want to be close and connected.  
I realize and take seriously that you need to experience me as safe.  
I realize that when I'm wrapped up in my own needs and hurts and feel a need to protect myself, I'm not thinking about you and how you feel. I'd like to shift into protecting you and us instead of protecting just me.  
I realize and take seriously that if I am anxious, scared, angry, and frustrated, you probably are, too.  
I realize you are upset, too, and I am pledging you support and empathy even though I'm also upset. I really want you to be happy.  
I really want you to know how important you are to me, how much I care for you, and that I want to protect our relationship.  
I realize and take seriously that I have to trust you and also be trustworthy

**WHEN I'VE DONE THESE THINGS, YOU SEEM TO:**

**WHEN I SEE YOU DE-ESCALATING AND REASSURING ME OF YOUR AFFECTION, I FEEL:**

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