

Making Love Last
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Exploring My Protectors

Take some time to think about how you responded in a recent conflict with your spouse. Use the following questions to help in your exploration.ⁱ

1. What happened? What did your spouse say or do that triggered a reaction in you?
2. What emotion came up in you when it first happened? Did other emotions follow? (Use the “Feeling Words” list)
3. What was the first thought that came to your mind? Did other thoughts follow? For example: *I want to leave. I’m unimportant. I’m right. Why can’t my partner.* .
4. What did you want to do immediately?
5. What did you actually say or do?
6. How did your partner respond?
7. What did you feel, think, and do when they responded in that way?
8. Can you identify a common pattern in your interactions?
9. What do you typically do to protect yourself when you get into these patterns?
10. Do your feelings remind you of a time in your childhood when you felt compelled to protect yourself in a similar way?

Your emotions, reactions, and self-protective efforts help you identify your protectors.

ⁱ This template is adapted from Herbine-Blank, “Tracking Sequences Meditation,” *Intimacy from the Inside Out*.