

Aftermath of a Fight or a Regrettable Incident

This form is a guide for processing what happened after a fight or regrettable incident. This form is designed to try to increase understanding between the two of you. The idea here is that there is no absolute "reality" when two people miss each other in turning toward one another, or turning away, but only two "subjective realities." Everyone is right. Processing means talking about what happened without getting back into it, and finding one way to make this kind of interaction better in the future. Try to make it your job to understand your partner's reality, not argue for your own reality.

Talk About and Accept What You Were Each Feeling

I FELT:		
1. defensive.	17. I was right and you were wrong.	32. I was overwhelmed with emotion.
2. not listened to.	18. both of us were partly right.	33. not calm.
3. feelings got hurt.	19. out of control.	34. stubborn
4. totally flooded	20. frustrated	35. powerless.
5. angry.	21. righteously indignant.	36. I had no influence.
6. sad.	22. both morally justified.	37. I wanted to win this one.
7. unloved	23. unfairly picked on.	38. my opinions didn't even matter.
8. misunderstood.	24. unappreciated.	39. There was a lot of give and take.
9. criticized.	25. disliked	40. I had no feelings at all.
10. took a complaint personally.	26. unattractive.	41. I had no idea what I was feeling.
11. like you didn't even like me.	27. stupid	42. lonely.
12. not cared about.	28. morally outraged.	43. alienated.
13. worried.	29. taken for granted.	44. I was inflexible
14. afraid.	30. like leaving.	
15. unsafe.	31. like staying and talking this through.	
16. tense.		

Discuss and Validate Each Subjective Reality

Take turns. Talk about how you each saw the situation, what your perspective was. Focus on your feelings and the needs you had in this situation (perhaps unexpressed). Try to listen compassionately. When your partner is done, try to communicate that you understand some of his or her perspective. Validate.

Accept Responsibility

What role did you play in this fight? (Admitting Mode)

WHAT SET ME UP		
1. I've been very stressed and irritable lately.	8. I've been more typically turning away.	15. I've not asked for what I need.
2. I've not expressed much appreciation toward you lately	9. I've been getting easily upset.	16. I've been feeling a bit like a martyr.
3. I've taken you for granted.	10. I've been depressed lately.	17. I've needed to be alone.
4. I've been overly sensitive lately.	11. I had a chip on my shoulder lately.	18. I've not wanted to take care of anybody.
5. I've been overly critical lately.	12. I've not been very affectionate.	19. I have been very preoccupied
6. I've not shared very much of my inner world.	13. I've not made time for good things between us.	20. I have been very stressed lately
7. I've not been emotionally available.	14. I've not been a very good listener lately.	21. I haven't felt very much confidence in myself
		22. I have been running on empty

Identify the triggers for each of you: What escalated the interaction?

Put in your own words what escalated the interaction for you. These are often old and familiar feelings. Here are some categories:

WHAT TRIGGERED ME		
I felt excluded	I felt uncared for	This felt so unfair to me
I felt powerless	I felt lonely	I had trouble with your anger or yelling
I felt not listened to	You weren't there for me when I was vulnerable and needed you	I had trouble with your sadness or despair
I couldn't ask for what I needed	I couldn't just talk about my feelings without you going ballistic	I felt trapped
I felt scolded	Once again I was the bad guy and you were innocent	I felt you had no passion for me
I felt judged	I was not getting taken care of very well	I couldn't ask for what I needed
I felt blamed		I felt unloved
I felt disrespected		I felt controlled
I felt no affection		I felt manipulated
I felt unsafe		

Understand Why These Are Triggers.

Rewind the "videotape" of your life in your mind. Stop at an incident you remember from your childhood or past in general (not in this relationship) in which you got triggered in the same way or had some of these very same feelings as you did this time.

- Tell the story of that incident, how it happened, what you felt.
- Listen to your partner's story with empathy.

Overall, What Was Your Contribution to the Fight?

Figure Out How To Make It Better Next Time.

- What is one way that your partner can make it better next time this kind of incident happens again?
- What's one way that you can make it better next time?