

"Can we try again?"

When what you've been doing isn't working

I've been feeling bad about...

Think of this as a peace offering, a gentle request to try again, with more heart—and without the anger.



- ☐ what just happened.
- ☐ the way we left things.
- ☐ how helpless I feel.
- ☐ how often we fight.
- ☐ the way we fight.
- ☐ how angry you get with me.
- ☐ how angry I get with you.
- ☐ how disconnected I feel.
- ☐ how we talk to each other.
- ☐ the rocky state of our relationship.

- ☐ how little time we spend together.
- ☐ how strained things are.
- ☐ how often we bring out the worst in each other.
- ☐ how little kindness we show each other.
- ☐ how little affection there is between us.
- ☐ other

I wonder how much of our problem is that...

- ☐ we're always exhausted.
- ☐ we're both hurting.
- ☐ we both feel judged.
- ☐ we don't use our tools.
- ☐ we need a vacation.
- ☐ we both think we're right.
- ☐ we both feel unappreciated.
- ☐ neither of us feels understood.
- ☐ we can't talk to each other without getting hurt or defensive.
- ☐ there's an elephant in the room.
- ☐ we're both stretched too thin.

- ☐ ☐ I'm ☐ you're depressed.
- ☐ our expectations are unrealistic.
- ☐ we don't call Time Outs.
- ☐ I don't feel safe being honest.
- ☐ we don't know how to move forward.
- ☐ we're both afraid to ask for anything.
- ☐ neither of us wants to admit that...

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I wonder how much of our problem is that... (CONT'D)

- ☐ what you want may be more than I can give.
- ☐ our needs and wants are different.
- ☐ we can't get on the same page with our kids.
- ☐ we don't spend enough time together.
- ☐ we fight about little things.
- ☐ the big things are too scary to talk about.
- ☐ you haven't forgiven me.

- ☐ I haven't forgiven you.
- ☐ we're afraid to ask for what we really want, so we keep disappointing each other.
- ☐ instead of approaching sensitive topics with sensitivity, we trigger each other.
- ☐ ☐ I'm ☐ you're crabby because we don't have sex much anymore.
- ☐ other

I propose we try again. This time, could we please...

- ☐ wait to talk until we've both had a good night's sleep.
- ☐ find a babysitter so we can talk without interruptions.
- ☐ fill out Sorry cards* and read them to each other.
- ☐ go for a walk and give talking another try.
- ☐ agree not to talk until we're both ready to own our part in the conflict.
- ☐ agree to disagree without pouting, mocking, or punishing each other.

- ☐ not bring up the past to punish each other.
- ☐ be open to hearing why the past is still causing pain in the present.
- ☐ use The Art of Conversation* exercise to structure and guide difficult conversations.
- ☐ schedule time with Betsy to help us express our feelings more skillfully.
- ☐ other



Here are a few things I need to work on...

- ☐ being kinder.
- ☐ being less defensive.
- ☐ welcoming feedback.
- ☐ saying yes more often.
- ☐ fighting fair.
- ☐ putting your needs first.
- ☐ letting go of resentment.
- ☐ forgiving.
- ☐ being respectful of your time.
- ☐ being more considerate.
- ☐ cutting back at work.
- ☐ not using guilt to get my way.
- ☐ not interrupting.
- ☐ not giving advice unless you ask for it.
- ☐ not monopolizing conversations.
- ☐ stopping when you say "Stop!"
- ☐ using the S.T.O.P. Strategy* to calm down before trying again.
- ☐ being more honest.
- ☐ taking constructive feedback without getting defensive.
- ☐ initiating.

- ☐ accepting a "No!" answer—without pressuring or pouting.
- ☐ keeping my promises.
- ☐ showing more appreciation.
- ☐ softening the way I bring up hard topics.
- ☐ putting away my phone when you're talking to me.
- ☐ not letting my fears stop you from doing what you love.
- ☐ not insisting I understand.
- ☐ giving you what you want instead of what I like better.
- ☐ being less defensive.
- ☐ admitting when I'm wrong.
- ☐ admitting I have a problem with...  Own your shit. Name it: anger? alcohol? lying? spending? judging?

- ☐ apologizing sooner.
- ☐ being more accepting.
- ☐ being more affectionate.
- ☐ other

If you need other things from me, please tell me what they are.

I think we can do a lot better if we both try harder.

Thanks for listening.

Signed: