

FIRE DRILL - (For Couples)

The FIRE Drill consists of four elements that give you a way to organize and prioritize objectives. This structure enables you to harness more of your energy and become more collaborative. Through the FIRE Drill, you will identify, recall and revise the important aspects of your union and clarify what you aspire to create as a couple.

The FIRE Drill is based on two concepts:

1. You can't create a flourishing relationship by only fixing what is wrong
2. Where your attention goes, the energy flows.

Meeting as a couple will help you stay on track. By working first individually and later together, you can set a positive direction for your future.

Focus: What do you want to create together? Individually?

Integrity: Are you being the kind of partner you aspire to be?

Reflection and Research: Why is your partner so distressed?

Encouragement and Empathy: How do you support your partner in an ongoing way?

FIRE DRILL - Focus

Creating Your Vision

Couples Vision: A strong desire that is aligned with your values and supported by a plan.

A vision involves fantasizing and identifying something you really want. A vision contains enough passion that you are willing to put in sustained effort to bring it about. This focus involves identifying, recalling, or revising the important dreams you had when you got together with your partner. Just allow yourself to think creatively about the type of relationship you desire.

Fill in any of the following sections with your vision of how you want your relationship to be:

Family

1.

2.

Couple

1.

2.

Work/Career

1.

2.

Self Development

1.

2.

Community/ Social

1.

2.

Financial

1.

2.

Physical

1.

2.

Spiritual

1.

2.

Hobbies

1.

2.

Health

1.

2.

You know you have described your vision when:

The results are hard to achieve, i.e., it will require “stretching.”

You are excited when you think about it.

The results of the vision are meaningful to you.

The results make a difference in your life and, often, make a difference in someone else’s life.

The results are visible and, at least to some degree, measurable.

The results will reflect your strengths and core values.

Unfortunately, some attitudes may get in the way of constructing or realizing your own vision. Examples are:

I can’t really have what I want.

I want something only if someone else wants it too.

What I want is not that important.

Even if I begin, I will eventually fail.

My partner will laugh at it or not be supportive.

I can’t stand how anxious I feel when imagine getting what I want.

I feel guilty for wanting too much.

If you can’t construct a vision, start writing down what kind of job, family, marriage, or career you would absolutely hate to have. Take, for example, the worst job you can imagine. Write down all the qualities, conditions, and situations that would make for a very, very miserable working experience. Then reverse the qualities and characteristics and to create the vision of your ideal job.

Your vision also evolves as you move toward it. It will require new skills and capabilities. Ask yourself an important question: “What will I have to do that I don’t want to do to realize this vision?” Every vision will carry with it some undesirable task(s). Don’t let these make you believe your vision is wrong. Accept that your vision will involve some drudge work that you won’t enjoy. As you get clearer on your individual and collective vision, write it down to clarify what it looks like.

The more detail your vision has, the more compelling it will be. Alert! Alert! In the beginning stage, do not think about or discuss impediments. The best way to kill a budding dream is to ask, “Well, how is that going to happen?” or “Are you really serious about wanting that?” Asking these questions will surely strangle emerging desires before you see the bigger picture.

Writing out your plan of action after you have established the agreed upon objective will help solidify your vision and also help keep you on track.

FIRE DRILL - Integrity

Close the gap between how you currently function and how you aspire to be.

Integrity means living congruently. Integrity is when you close the gap between how you are and how you want to be. Integrity allows you to shift away from partner reform.

Some skills, acts of integrity might be:

Be emotionally resilient during difficult discussions. Avoid the common defensive coping mechanisms of finger pointing, resentful compliance, whining, confusion and withdrawal.

Negotiate and propose solutions that work for both partners.

Do what you say you are going to do.

Acting with integrity will allow you and your partner to function as a team.

1. What do you have to do, change, or adjust in order to be a more effective partner?

2. What will it take to close the gap between how you are and how you want to be?

3. What values do you aspire to?

FIRE DRILL - Reflection and Research

Learn about your barriers and the skills necessary to become the partner you aspire to be.

In order to move forward, you need to first reflect on how you get in your own way. You also want to learn about the values, goals, and aspirations of your partner.

- 1. What gets in the way of your being the kind of partner you want to be?**

- 2. What is so distressing to your partner about you or your interaction? Why?**

- 3. List the skills you need to create your desired relationship:**

- 4. Questions I would like to ask to better understand my partner's distress:**

- 5. Questions I would like to ask to better understand my partner's goals:**

FIRE DRILL - Encouragement and Empathy

Give your partner ongoing support and understand the effect of your actions on your partner.

Encouragement is expressing ongoing support, appreciation and recognition for the contributions and qualities your partner brings to the relationship. This is a good time to reward your partner with Above and Beyond the Call of Duty cards (ABCD cards) if your therapist has given you some.

Empathy is understanding your partner's distress, aspirations, insecurities, values, and goals. It is also understanding the effect of your actions on your partner. For example, empathy is understanding (cognitively and emotionally) what your partner's day was like without responding negatively.

1. How do you give ongoing support to your partner?

2. How well do you understand your partner's vulnerabilities?

3. Can you support your partner's desired goals?

4. Can you extend, nurture and help create soothing moments of connection?

5. When things go wrong, can you support and aid in repair attempts?