



# How To Create Change with Conflict-Avoidant Partners

Dr. Ellyn Bader  
445 Burgess Dr Suite 150 · Menlo Park, CA 94025  
650.327.5915  
[www.couplesinstitute.com](http://www.couplesinstitute.com)

# How To Create Change with Conflict-Avoidant Partners

When a couple with a history of conflict avoidance comes to see you, change is often excruciatingly slow. You may wonder, *Am I being effective?*

## Here is why these couples are so challenging:

- Often, they wait for their partners to be active, while they remain passive.
- They desperately want better marriages but have deep fears and avoid risking vulnerability.
- They will “collapse” quickly rather than truthfully expose their own desires.
- They tiptoe into moments of differentiation and then retreat.
- They look to you to bring up the real substance in therapy.

Is it any wonder your sessions can be so exhausting?

So how do you work with these partners?

## Here is a step-by-step summary of what it takes to create substantial and enduring change in long-term conflict-avoidant relationships.

- Explain the normal developmental stages for couples relationships and describe why they are stuck.
- Describe their avoidant pattern clearly.
- Compassionately explain how their choice of avoiding conflict is self-protective even though it inhibits their growth.
- Confront passive behaviors when they occur in your sessions.
- Ask each partner what will help them tolerate more emotional intensity and what support they want from you.
- Establish some risk-taking goals for each partner.
- Create intensity in sessions by staying with substantial issues until they are resolved while taking both partners into account.

In my online training program, *The Developmental Model of Couples Therapy: Integrating Attachment, Differentiation and Neuroscience*, you'll get to see real cases with specific interventions that work for helping conflict-avoidant couples evolve.

**The Developmental Model training** is comprehensive. It is strategically designed to show you how to transform couples at all developmental stages. You'll learn to disrupt passive-symbiotic systems, challenge hostile/demanding partners, and increase intimacy in more evolved couples.

If you are interested in watching videos, reading transcripts of sessions and listening to case discussions designed to move partners forward, I encourage you to sign up for training when registration opens from January 21 - 24, 2021.

Making you a more effective catalyst for change,

Ellyn

---

P.S. Don't take my word for it. Read what a participant says.

*You and your husband are a class act, and I have learned a lot. I have received training in other modalities — your approach is the most substantial and the most flexible of the systems I have seen.*

~ Steve Gill, Ph.D., Sedona, Arizona

P.P.S. Training will be open only for four days. ***Be ready to take action on January 21, 2021.***