



A gentler way back to each other

A guided conversation about connection, trust, and the marriage you want to build.

Difficult seasons can change how partners show up. This worksheet gives each of you space to name what hurt, what still matters, and what you are willing to practice. You do not need identical feelings or immediate forgiveness to begin.

How to use this worksheet

1. Complete your own reflection page separately (pages 2 and 3).
2. Share one answer at a time. Allow each person to finish before responding.
3. The listener reflects: "What I hear you saying is ... Did I understand?"
4. Complete pages 4 and 5 together, preferably with your therapist.
5. Choose small, realistic steps and review them in one week.

Understanding the effect of stress does not erase the impact of emotional absence. Support and accountability can exist together. Each person can take responsibility for their own choices; responsibilities do not have to be equal.

If either person becomes overwhelmed, pause and agree on a time to return. You may skip a prompt and discuss it in therapy. If speaking honestly brings fear, threats, or pressure, stop the exercise and speak privately with your therapist.

Date / planned therapist review



My reflection - Partner A

Complete privately first. Share only what you feel ready to discuss.

My name / what I would like my partner to understand

1. When we felt disconnected, how did it affect me? What do I need heard?

2. What did I do or stop doing that affected us? What can I take responsibility for?

3. What specific actions would help me feel more able to trust and connect?

4. What do I still value about us? What do I hope our marriage feels like?

5. What is one change I am willing to practice this week?



My reflection - Partner B

Complete privately first. Share only what you feel ready to discuss.

My name / what I would like my partner to understand

1. When we felt disconnected, how did it affect me? What do I need heard?

2. What did I do or stop doing that affected us? What can I take responsibility for?

3. What specific actions would help me feel more able to trust and connect?

4. What do I still value about us? What do I hope our marriage feels like?

5. What is one change I am willing to practice this week?



Our common ground

Listen for shared hopes. Differences can become topics to explore in therapy.

Possible values: honesty, steadiness, kindness, teamwork, affection, family, respect, joy.

1. Which three values matter most to both of us?

2. What did we hear in each other's answers? Where do our hopes overlap?

3. Three months from now, what would a better ordinary day together look like?

4. Shared goal 1: What will we do, how often, and how will we notice progress?

5. Shared goal 2: What will we do, how often, and how will we notice progress?

Example: We will have a 10-minute check-in, without phones, three evenings each week.

Choose goals both of you freely agree to. Save unresolved differences for your therapist.



Our one-week trust practice

Trust grows through actions that are realistic, repeated, and noticed.

Partner A: My specific commitment / when I will follow through

Partner B: My specific commitment / when I will follow through

Our boundary around family or political stress: What will protect our time together?

Our pause plan: Signal, calming activity, and agreed time to return to the conversation

If a commitment is missed: How will we acknowledge the impact and make a repair?

Review date / what helped us connect / what needs adjusting / what to bring to therapy

A reconnection phrase: "I feel overwhelmed, and I want to stay connected. Can we pause and come back at ____?" A repair phrase: "I see how that affected you. My next step is ____."