

# Recognizing the Negative Cycle<sup>1</sup>

*Below include the factual statement made or action taken. Stick to the facts, be concrete and specific. DO NOT include interpretations, judgments, or perceptions. For example, don't say something like "When you are just being difficult as usual," but instead "When you yelled, walked out of the room and said you are irresponsible..."*

**When you said or did (factual information NOT perceptions)**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
**I did not feel secure or close to you.**

*Below include your behaviors from your behavior checklist. And then include what you hope this behavior will accomplish.*

**I tend to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**I behave this way to try to deal with difficult and uncomfortable feelings OR do this so I can change our dynamics.**

**I do it in the hope that** (e.g., we will avoid more conflict OR I will persuade you to respond to me more). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Please refer to your feelings list and write down some of the feelings you experience below.*

**As this pattern keeps going, I feel** (frustration, anger, numbness, emptiness, or confusion.) \_\_\_\_\_.

*Summarize the most catastrophic conclusion you can imagine below. For example, You do not care about us. I am not important to you. I can never please you.*

**What I then say to myself about our relationship is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Below write down the behavior or verb to describe what behavior you see you your partner do. For example, shut down or push me to respond.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
<sup>1</sup> Johnson, S. (2008) Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

**I realize that the dynamics that happen in your relationship makes it harder and harder for us to safely connect and when I move in the way I described above, you seem to then \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Refer to your behavior checklist and fill in the blanks below. Then name the term you would use to describe your negative cycle.*

**The more I \_\_\_\_\_, the more you \_\_\_\_\_.  
We are then both trapped in pain and isolation.**

**Maybe we can warn each other when this negative cycle starts. We can call it \_\_\_\_\_. Recognizing our negative cycle is the first step to getting out of our cycle of disconnection.**

**Share the completed script in blue with your partner.**

This script was derived from Johnson, S. (2008) Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

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