

Aftermath of a Fight or Regrettable Incident



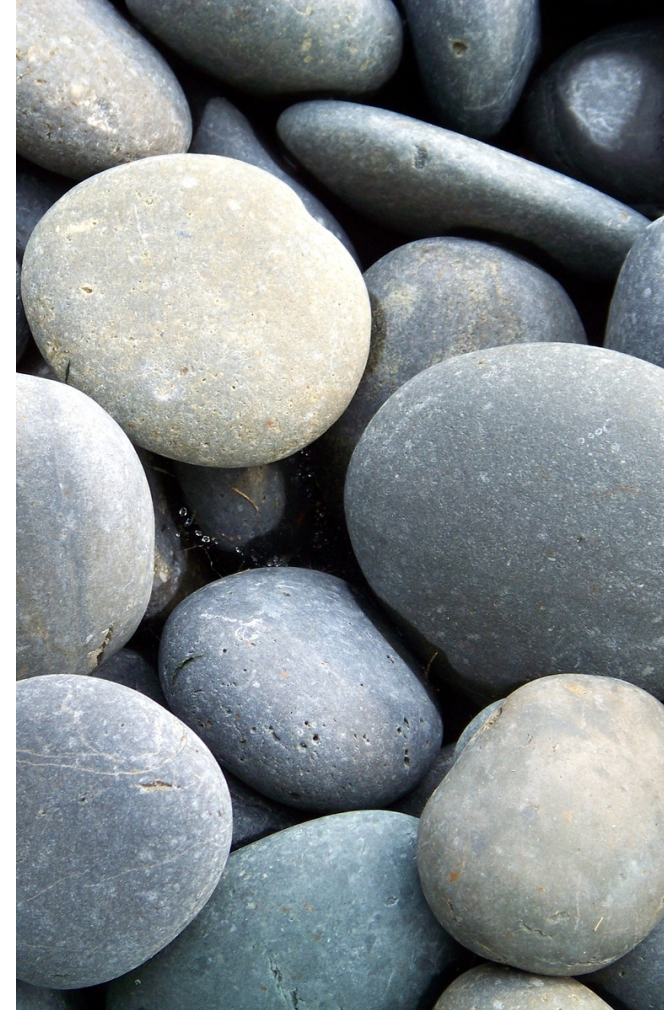
The GOAL is greater understanding - addressing the process and **how** the issue was talked about, without getting back into the fight. So, wait until you're both calm.

We assume that **each** of your realities has validity. Perception is everything. Don't focus on "the facts".

Pay attention to the common barriers to communication and their antidotes as you move through the process.

The Five Steps

1. **Feelings**: Share how you felt. Do not say why you felt that way. Avoid commenting on your peer's feelings.
2. **Realities**: Describe your "reality". Take turns. Summarize and validate at least a part of your partners' reality.
3. **Triggers**: Share what experiences or memories you've had that might have escalated the interaction, and the stories of why these are triggers for each of you.
4. **Responsibility**: Acknowledge your own role in contributing to the fight or regrettable incident.
5. **Constructive Plans**: Plan together one way that each of you can make it better next time.



Step One

I felt...

1. Defensive
2. Not listened to
3. Feelings got hurt
4. Totally flooded
5. Angry
6. Sad
7. Unloved
8. Misunderstood
9. Criticized
10. Took a complaint personally
11. like you didn't even like me
12. Not cared about
13. Worried
14. Afraid
15. Unsafe
16. Tense
17. Out of control
18. Frustrated
19. Righteously indignant
20. Morally justified



Feelings: Share how you felt. Do not say why you felt that way. Avoid commenting on your peer's feelings.

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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 21. Unfairly picked on | 29. Alienated |
| 22. Unappreciated | 30. Abandoned |
| 23. Disliked | 31. Culpable |
| 24. Unattractive | 32. Lonely |
| 25. Stupid | 33. Disloyal |
| 26. Taken for granted | 34. Shocked |
| 27. Powerless | 35. I had no feelings at all |
| 28. I had no influence | |



Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.” — Lao Tzu

Step Two

Realities

Describe your “reality”. Take Turns. Summarize and validate at least a part of your partners reality.

- A. Take turns describing your perceptions, your own reality of what happened during the regrettable incident. Describe yourself and your perception.

Don't describe your partner. Avoid attack and blame. Talk about what you might have needed from your partner. Describe your perceptions like a reporter, giving an objective play by play description. Say *“I heard you saying”* rather than *“You said”*.

- B. Summarize and then validate your peers reality by saying something like, *“It makes sense to me how you saw this and what your perceptions and needs were. I get it”*. Use empathy by saying something like, *“I can see why this upset you”*.

Validation doesn't mean you agree, but that you can understand even a part of your partners experience of the incident.

- C. Do both people feel understood? If yes, MOVE ON. If no, ask, *“What do you I need to know to understand your perspective better?”* After summarizing and validating, ask your peer, *“Did I get it?”* And *“Is there anything else?”*



Step Three

Triggers

Share what experiences or memories you've had that might have escalated the inter-action, and the stories of why these are triggers for each of you.

- As you rewind the video tape of your memory, stop at a point where you had a similar set of feelings triggered in the past. Now tell the story of that past moment to your partner, so your partner can understand why that is a trigger for you.
- Share your stories- it will help your peer to understand you. As you think about your early history or childhood, is there a story you remember that relates to what got triggered in you, your "enduring vulnerabilities?" Your peer needs to know you, so that your peer can be more sensitive to you.

Examples of Triggers

- A. I felt judged. It reminded me of being bullied in school
- B. I felt excluded. It reminded me of growing up
- C. I felt criticized. I'm very sensitive to that
- D. I felt flooded. It reminded me of previous relationships
- E. I felt out of control.
- F. I felt ashamed
- G. I felt lonely
- H. I felt disrespected

Step Four

Responsibility

Acknowledge your own role in contributing to the fight or regrettable incident.

Under ideal conditions, you might have done better at talking about this issue.

Share how you set yourself up for miscommunication and conflict.

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| 1. I've been very stressed and irritable lately | 7. I've not made time for good things between us |
| 2. I've not expressed much appreciation towards you lately | 8. I have not been a good listener lately |
| 3. I've taken you for granted | 9. I've not wanted to take care of anybody |
| 4. I've been overly sensitive | 10. I have been very preoccupied |
| 5. I've been turning away more | 11. I have been running on empty |
| 6. I've had a chip on my shoulder | 12. I haven't felt very much confidence in myself |

Specifically what do you regret? What was your contribution to the incident?

What do you apologize for? (Say out loud) "I am sorry that..."

- A. I over-reacted
- B. I was really grumpy
- C. I was defensive
- D. I was negative





Step Five

Constructive Plan

Plan together one way that each of you can make it better next time.

Share one thing your peer can do to make a discussion of this issue better next time.

(It's important that you remain calm as you do this)

Then, While it's still your turn, share one thing you can do to make it better next time.

What do you need to be able to put this behind you and move on?

Resource: Gottman Institute

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