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"Less Drama and More Success in Your Business and Personal Relationships"



Dr. Stephanie's  
RELATIONSHIP REPAIR SHOP

## Dreams Within Conflict

This exercise has been helpful for many couples. This exercise for helping to manage conflict within married couples was developed by The Gottman Institute, Inc.

You may try this exercise at home, but if you have trouble with it then please wait until your next therapy appointment to get assistance.

**When you have difficult conflict over the same issue, sometimes you can get unstuck by not focusing on solving the problem. Instead just try to be your partner's friend and understand the meaning of your partner's dreams. Then take some time before discussing the problem again for the purpose of seeking a solution.**

**Speakers Job** – Speak about your dreams. What are your feelings and beliefs about the issue that you are fighting about? Specifically, what is the dream behind your position? Tell the story of the dream or the belief, where it comes from and what it symbolizing. Do not try to argue or persuade your partner to agree with your point of view; just explain how you see things.

*Possible Dreams you might want to speak about:*

- A sense of freedom
- A dream of adventure
- Having a sense of order
- Building something important

**Listener's Job:** Make your partner feel safe, listen the way a friend would listen. Ask questions to understand your partner's dreams and the story behind their dreams. Do not try to solve the problem or judge your partner's feelings, thoughts, or dreams about this issue.

*Sample Questions for the Dream Catcher (the Listener):*

- What feelings do you have about this issue?
- What do you need? What do you dream about when it comes to this issue?
- Is there a story behind this dream for you, or does this relate to your background or childhood in some way?
- Tell me why this dream is so important to you?
- Do you have a fear or a disaster scenario in not having this dream honored?