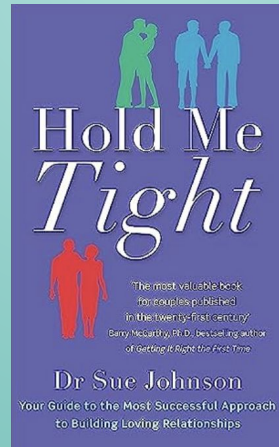


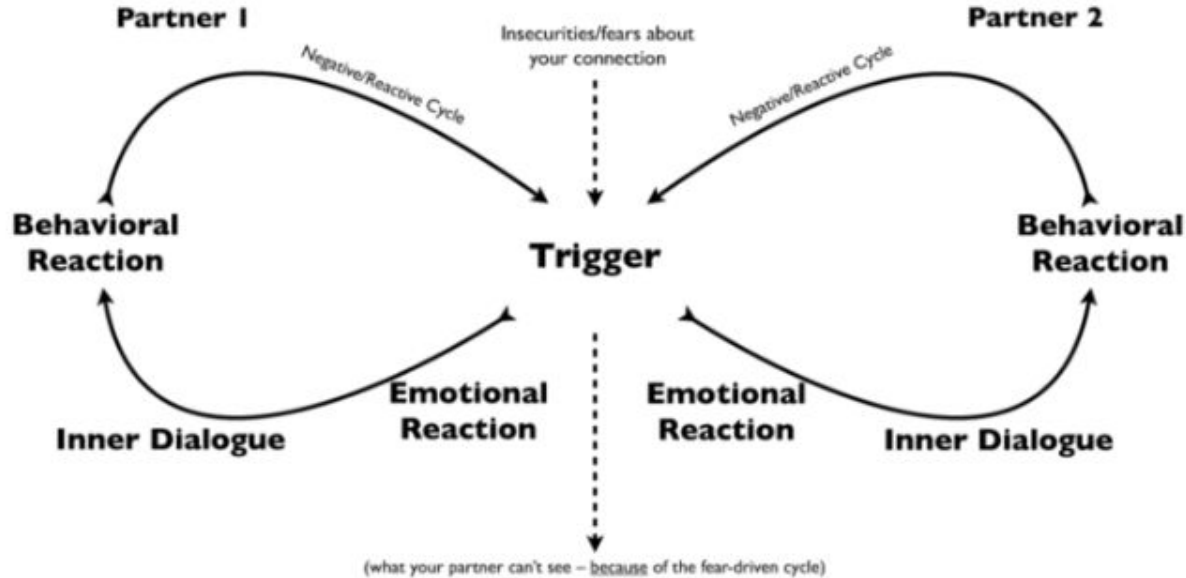
Infinity Loop: Identifying Negative Cycles in Your Relationship



Do you ever feel like you go through the same vicious cycle in your relationship? Do you and your partner find yourselves arguing over the same issues, time and time again? Do you want to figure out what isn't working and make a change for the better?

Consider using the Infinity Loop to improve your relationship. The Infinity Loop is part of *Emotionally Focused Therapy*, an evidence-based theory used in couple's therapy developed primarily by Dr. Sue Johnson (check out *Hold Me Tight* as a great resource to learn more). The Infinity Loop helps couples visualize the negative cycles that they get stuck





(what your partner can't see - because of the fear-driven cycle)



Cycle vs. Heart Illustration for EFT (SIMPLIFIED VERSION)

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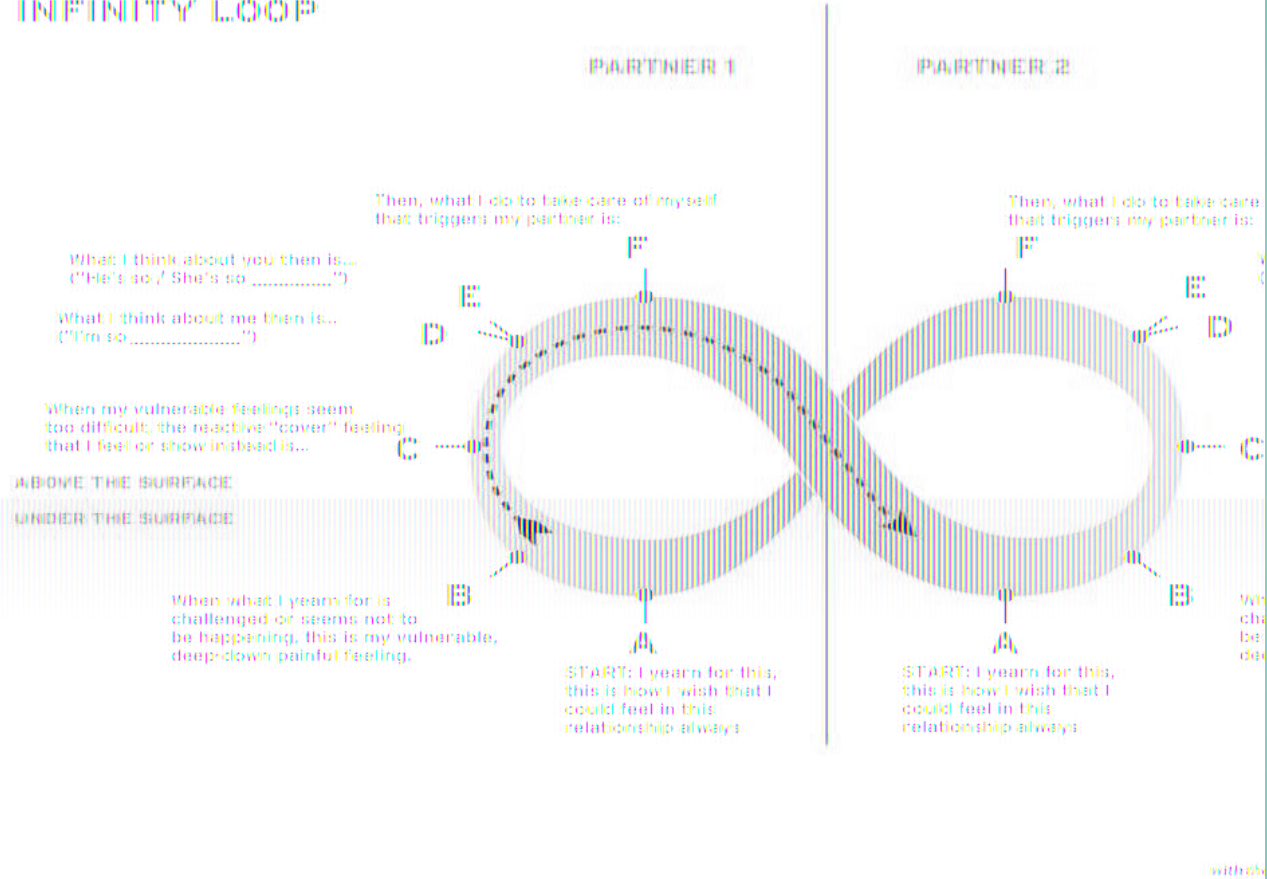
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(Modified from "The Negative Cycle" © Scott Woolley, PhD.)

Dr. Sue Johnson, the pioneer in EFT, was the first to identify how negative cycles keep couples away from the "Hearts of the Matter." This illustration is just my attempt to visually organize her concepts.)

- Slow down, identify feelings, and thoughts, and learn to share them :)
- Does your outward behavior match what you want your partner to learn?
- How can we use 'I' language to ask for what we really need?

INFINITY LOOP



- Great homework tool for changing the way you think about what is happening in your relationship.
 - Most of us have learned to judge, criticize, and use 'you' language
- How can we learn to be more curious and less defensive?
- What is the best way to share these thoughts/feelings?

“When my vulnerable feelings are too difficult I show Instead” – How do you tend to behave behind those thoughts and feelings? Example: I get angry and create distance from you.

“What I think about me then is.....” – What is your perception of yourself during these times? Example: I’m always being taken for granted and I shouldn’t make myself available to you.

“What I think about you then is.....” – What is your perception of you partner during these times? What feeds the vulnerable feeling? Example: You don’t care about me enough to make me a priority.

“Then, what I do to take care of myself is..... which triggers my partner” – What behavior comes out as a response, that is directed at your partner? Example: I tend to totally shut-down, which my partner doesn’t understand, or I pick a fight over something small from our past.

Pursuer

Behaviors

Critical Hostile Aggressive
Attack

Secondary Emotions:

Anger Rage Frustration
Jealousy Anxiety Resentment

Primary Emotions:

Hurt Alone Unwanted
Isolated Abandoned Unimportant
Disconnected Unloved Sadness
Fear

Withdrawer

Behaviors

Shut down Silence Distance
Become defensive

Secondary Emotions:

Anger Rage Frustration
Jealousy Anxiety Resentment

Primary Emotions:

Rejected Inadequate Shame
Overwhelmed Numb/Frozen
Hopeless Unimportant Sadness
Fear

- What roles do you and your partner typically play?
 - How hard do you try to hang in there before shutting down or lashing out?
- Do you know your primary emotions? Do you know each other's?
 - How are they shared? How could this be shifted/changed to better communicate feelings and needs?
- **KEY TAKEAWAY!**
 - Better timeouts, transitions, and resolutions