

THE ZERO NEGATIVITY PLEDGE

Nothing can happen in a relationship that is not safe. No relationship can be safe if there is negativity in the form of criticism, blaming and defensiveness.

1. We understand that “negativity” is any transaction that ruptures our connection – whether intentional or accidental. This includes negativity under the guise of “constructive criticism” and non-verbal communication such as a glare, an eye-roll, etc.
2. We pledge to make our relationship a Zone of Zero Negativity for the next 30 days by omitting from all our interactions with each other any words, tones, or body language that could be experienced as a “putdown,” thus rupturing our connection.
3. We will make requests when we have a problem and ask for what we want in a way that does not put our partner down.
4. We will express our concerns using “I” statements rather than “You” statements.
5. If we experience a rupture, we will send a gentle signal (bing, ouch, wow, oops!) immediately to communicate that we have experienced a “put-down,” and then use the repair process to restore safety and connecting.
6. We pledge to give three appreciations daily to each other, no matter what!
7. Will chart our progress on a calendar for the next 30 days, recording when we succeed, when we fail, and when we repair it and reconnect (see next page).

By signing below I agree to the following zero negativity pledge:

Signed Date

Signed Date

THE ZERO NEGATIVITY REPAIR PROCESS

What if you experience negativity? Say, “Ouch.” (or whatever word you agree on that signals you hear or feel negativity) And now, it’s time to repair and reconnect using one of the methods listed below.

1. Be curious rather than negative. Ask for a dialogue to learn what produced the “ouch.” Was it a word, tone of voice, look in the eye, gesture, etc.?
2. Ask your partner to say what they said in a way that doesn’t feel so negative to you. You can model it for them.
3. Take a time out. Ask for a RE-DO. You can simply start over and redo the transaction.
4. Science says it takes 5 positives to repair 1 negative. Give 5 appreciations to your partner.
5. Have a dialogue with your partner about what repairs an “ouch” for each of you. It can include apologies, laughing, a back rub, dancing with each other, etc.
6. When you repair and restore connection, put a “reset” sticker over the frowning face and CELEBRATE. This is a moment of triumph. The sign of a healthy relationship is how quickly you can repair.