



# The Infidelity Recovery Institute

## Processing Conflict

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### *Instructions:*

This exercise is a guide for processing and evaluating a fight or any discussion of an issue that did not go well. The goal is to increase understanding between the two of you *without falling back into the disagreement*. The belief here is that there is no absolute “reality” in a disagreement but rather there are two “subjective realities”. This form is designed to help you get at these two realities and to ease similar situations in the future.

### Step One:

#### *Feelings*

Each of you is to take turns describing what you were feeling during the disagreement. You may either chose from the list below or come up with your own description. Remember to keep your comments simple and keep to the format “I felt.....:”, avoiding statements such as, “I felt like you....”

1. I felt defensive.
2. I felt listened to.
3. My feelings got hurt.
4. I felt understood.
5. I felt angry.
6. I felt sad.
7. I felt happy.
8. I felt misunderstood.
9. I felt criticized.
10. I didn't take my partner's complaints personally.
11. I felt like my partner didn't even like me.
12. I felt cared for.
13. I was worried.
14. I felt afraid.
15. I felt safe.
16. I was relaxed.
17. I felt I was right and my partner was wrong.
18. I felt that both of us were partly right.
19. I felt out of control.
20. I felt in control.
21. I felt righteously indignant.
22. I felt we were both morally justified in our views.



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23. I felt unfairly picked on.
24. I felt appreciated.
25. I felt unappreciated.
26. I felt unattractive.
27. I felt attractive.
28. I was morally outraged.
29. I felt taken for granted.
30. I didn't feel taken for granted.
31. I felt like leaving.
32. I felt like staying and talking this through.
33. I was overwhelmed with emotion.
34. I felt calm.
35. I felt powerful.
36. I felt powerless.
37. I felt I had no influence.
38. I felt I could be persuasive.
39. I felt like my opinions didn't even matter.
40. There was a lot of give and take.
41. I had no feelings at all.
42. I had no idea what I was feeling.
43. I felt lonely.
44. I felt alienated.

*Other feelings?*

### Step Two:

*Share your subjective realities*

Summarize your own reality about the disagreement. What was the reality for you?

### Step Three:

*Find something in his/her story which you can understand*

Now, try and see how your partner's subjective reality might make sense, given your partner's perspective. Tell your partner about one piece of his/her reality which makes sense to you.

### Step Four:

*Are you Flooded?*

Check and see if either of you is flooded. If so, take a break and self-sooth before continuing.



## Step Five: Fidelity Recovery Institute

### Admitting your own role

It is essential that each of you take some responsibility for what happened. See if anything from the list below applies to your situation.

1. I have been very stressed and irritable lately.
2. I have not expressed much appreciation toward my spouse lately.
3. I have taken my spouse for granted.
4. I have been overly sensitive lately.
5. I have been overly critical lately.
6. I have not shared very much of my inner world.
7. I have not been emotionally available.
8. I have been turning away from my partner.
9. I have been getting easily upset.
10. I have been depressed lately.
11. I would say that I have a chip on my shoulder lately.
12. I have not been very affectionate.
13. I have not made time for good things between us.
14. I have not been a very good listener.
15. I have not asked for what I need.
16. I have been feeling a bit like a martyr.
17. I have needed to be alone.
18. I have not wanted to take care of anybody.

Add your own.

*Overall, my contribution to this fight was:*

## Step Six:

### Making it better in the future

1. What is one thing your spouse could do differently next time?
2. What is one thing you could do differently next time?