

# Understanding Your Cycle

Created by Cultivate Connection Counseling



We often find ourselves crossing tides with our partners. In certain moments, when conflict arises, we find it difficult to guide ourselves through the fog and make it safely to shore.

In Emotionally Focused Therapy, we see the process of cultivating connection as a lighthouse that guides us to land.

Various factors play a role in identifying the storm that couples may get caught in frequently - and ultimately, it can lead to further disconnect, disregard, or disengagement.

## 1 What is the Trigger?

What has my partner said or done that creates friction in the relationship?

Our partner or loved one does something that sends an 'alarm bell' to our brain. We move into this "fight, flight, or freeze" response. At this point, we begin to emotionally, or physically, push or pull ourselves away from our partner.

## 2 What is the Response?

How did I respond to my partner's words or actions?

We catch ourselves reacting to what our partner has said or done. In this moment, it can be difficult to gain awareness of what's happening internally. Instead, we are resentful, angry, irritated, frustrated, or upset.

## 3 What is the Story?

What message(s) do my partner's behaviors send me?

Oftentimes when we're caught in the friction, we internalize messages about how our partner is treating us. We begin to question our relationship, our partner, or ourselves.

We can begin to feel trapped, or entangled, in these negative cycles in our relationship. In Emotionally Focused Therapy, we focus on navigating the triggers together - the therapist works "within and between" the disconnect, disregard, or disengagement.

Within the process, we dive deeper into the vulnerable, hidden depths, of our reactions. Here, we can begin to see the vulnerable parts of our partner and ourselves, as well as very critical attachment needs.

