

RECONCILIATION TOOLKIT

Soften



MarriageHelper

You cannot reconcile until harshness and hardness are brought under control.

This is the most difficult, yet MOST IMPORTANT, part of reconciliation.

LESSON HIGHLIGHTS

VIDEO 1: How to be soft

- Be a safe place
- Don't bring up the past
- Don't throw bricks
- Stop using the 4 horsemen (contempt, defensiveness, criticism, and stonewalling)
- Staying "hard" will inhibit reconciliation from happening

VIDEO 2: Accept Responsibility

- We tend to focus on everything our partner does wrong
- Time to be introspective and accept responsibility for anything we have done that contributed to problems
- Offending spouse needs to accept responsibility for their actions (which were not justified), but offended spouse needs to see personal responsibility as well
- This helps build empathy

VIDEO 3: How to Trust Again

- People tend to harden defenses to protect themselves from getting hurt again
- Reconciling invites the chance to learn to trust again, even though it might hurt
- Go through the Learning to Trust Again eBook in this lesson

LESSON HIGHLIGHTS

VIDEO 4: Setting Boundaries in Conversation

- You and your spouse need to be able to talk in a safe environment while working towards reconciliation
- Agree to speak to each other with respect and kindness
- Agree to stop the 4 horsemen (and have a "safe" word to end conversations if needed)
- Ensure you talk about reconciliation when both of you are calm, comfortable and at ease
- Agree to say anything you want about yourself, but to not attack or blame your spouse during conversations
- There will be times where you can open up about what your spouse has done that has hurt you
- Don't use that as an opportunity to attack your spouse - it will hinder reconciliation
- Remember: it is what your spouse PERCEIVES is attacking, not necessarily what you intend
- This also may be why you want to go through this process with a marriage coach

VIDEO 5: Action Steps

- Apologize for the hurt that has happened by following the Softness exercise in the following pages
- Accept responsibility for things that you need to accept responsibility for without justifying actions
- Repent - make a public statement of your intention to not hurt the other person again
- Do something fun and light-hearted after difficult conversations (not necessarily right after, but in the following days)

THE SOFTNESS EXERCISE

Take some time to honestly think about the following phrases. Use the space provided to write your answers. Set a time for you and your spouse to come together and share with each other.

1. “I hurt you by....”

2. “I am truly sorry for....”

3. “My deeply felt intention is never to hurt you again, especially by...”

AHA MOMENTS

Space for you to write down what you learned, big takeaways, or AHA moments from this lesson.