



Understand We

Our Practice Blueprint

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You're invited to step into the WE, a shared space where you collaborate, align, and grow together. This exercise is an opportunity to move beyond individual perspectives and intentionally practice building a relationship that reflects a desire to understand one another – to understand what you both value, choose, and cultivate space that both of you are safe to bring you into the relationship.

Instructions: Print this document or replicate the relevant sections in a notebook, journal, or other preferred format. Actively use it as a reference during your own journey of self-discovery as a couple.

Objective & Goals | *What are we working for?*

Reflect on opportunities you want to explore or experience differently.

What is your focus, purpose, or goal(s) as a couple?

Examples:

- To understand our conflicts
- To open up to each other
- To set boundaries
- To manage anxiety or stress productively
- To feel seen and recognized
- To connect and play more
- To communicate our needs, and feel safe
- To be patient and compassionate

Our Focus:

Thinking & Doing | *Turning insight into action*

Balance thinking and talking about it with actual plans for doing it. Choose a few areas to actively **practice** and **do differently** as a couple.

What We Are Doing Differently:

Values | *What matters to us?*

Reflect on what matters most to you individually and as a couple. These are your **values and principles**.

Remember, values don't have to match – diversity creates opportunity.

Our Shared Values:

Beliefs | *What is our truth?*

Reflect on your beliefs as an individual and as a couple. Understand how “same territory – different maps” occur in your relationship. Explore the origin story behind those beliefs.

Remember, beliefs don’t have to be permanent – You can decide if you “rent”, “lease”, or “own” those truths.

Our Truth:

Reference Points | *How do we define success?*

Instead of looking outward (e.g., friends getting married, neighbors with houses), look inward. Define **your own** reference points for success as a couple.

Our Metrics for Success:

Reinforcement | *How do we celebrate and encourage?*

Identify what **productive reinforcement** looks and feels like for each of you. How do you make deposits into the relationship penny jar? Also, create rituals for celebration – daily, weekly, and yearly.

Encouragement Looks Like:

Celebration Rituals We’ll Practice:

Identity & Capabilities | *Who are we and what are our superpowers?*

Identify your individual and shared capabilities, skills, and life-earned superpowers.

Note the qualities you admire in each other and in others.

Our Capabilities:

Our Superpowers:

Styles & Quirks | *How “you do you...”*

Identify your individual styles, quirks, and self-achievement activities that make you...YOU!

Note the qualities you admire in each other and in others.

Our Styles and their Compliments:

Our Self-Achievement Activities:

Roles | *How do we want to show up?*

Consider your roles (partner, parent, friend, coworker, etc.) and how you want to show up in them. Create transparency and clarity for the roles that matter most.

How We Show Up:

Our Supportive Roles:

Self-Care & Play | *How we care for ourselves and play together*

Taking care of yourself isn't selfish – it's **self-full**. When we take care of ourselves, we then create time and space to be present and play with others.

Document:

- Your self-care routines
- How your partner can support you
- What play looks like to you
- Shared hobbies
- New hobbies to explore together
- Activities that spark **novelty** and joy

Our Self-Care:

Our Shared Activities and Play:

Transitions | *How we move through our day*

Identify the **predictable transitions** in your daily life. What is the pace and rhythm you each operate at. Reflect on how to pause, reset, and support each other during these changes.

Common Transition Points:

How We Can Support Each Other:

Motivation | *What keeps us going?*

What factors and strategies enable you to feel motivated? List **your internal and external motivators**, and how **structure and process** help you sustain momentum.

Our Forcing Functions:

Our Structure and Process:

Scarcity & Abundance | *What do we want and need?*

Identify what you're each longing for or missing. Understand what the minimum dose is for each other. Create rituals to **regularly share wants and needs** without judgment.

Our Current Wants & Needs:

How We'll Communicate What the Minimum Dose Looks and Feels Like:

Feelings & Emotions | *Our Switches & Dials...*

Understand what your nervous system needs. How do you each “squeeze the sponge” and let things out. What are your emotional and stress signals. Discuss what helps you **self-regulate** and what support you need from your partner.

My Emotional Signals:

Our Self Soothing Strategies:

Patterns & Habits | *Our unique behaviors...*

Name your patterns – especially those “junk food” habits and coping mechanisms that aren't always helpful but serve a purpose. Understanding them helps reduce their power and by translating those with your partner, helps to understand the “why?”

Patterns and Their Roles:

How We Can Support Them:

Systems | *Cultural, Race, Power, & Gender Impact(s)...*

Pull back the curtain on the systems that impact you. Share the headwinds that you face but may go unnoticed by others. Translating what those headwinds are and building understanding around them helps reduce their power and influence.

System Impact:

How We Can Support:

Intergenerational | *How do I carry the baton...*

Seek to Understand the Intergenerational impact from your family of origin, culture, or broader life experiences and influences. Understand and share how the past may leak into the present.

Family of Origin Impact:

How the Past Plays Out in The Present:

Boundaries & Guardrails | *What is “Me” and “Not Me”*

Each person defines their boundaries differently. Normalize discussing boundaries. Define what is **“Me”** and what is **“Not Me.”**

What is “Me...”:

What is “Not Me...”:

Trauma | *What safety looks & feels like...*

Each person experiences Trauma differently. How they feel safe is unique to them. Normalize discussing safety as it relates to mitigating the impact from trauma. Define what **Safe Is** and what is **Not safe.**

What is “Safe to Me”:

What is “Not Safe to Me...”:

Grief | *What Big “G” and little “g” grief look like...*

Each person experiences **Grief** differently. Grief can come in small doses – **little “g” Grief**. It can also come in overwhelming doses – **Big “G” Grief**. As you can try to disclose what Grief looks like to you and how it can be supported.

What is Big “G” Grief:

What is little “g” Grief:

How We Can Support One Another:

Narratives | *What's your story...*

Each partner brings their own scripts from life, family, culture, and past experiences. Reflect on how they intersect and influence your relationship.

My Stories/Scripts:

Where Our Stories Intersect or Clash:

Communication | *What are our "Talk Box" conversations?*

Some conversations need intention – time and space should be designated for certain conversations. Create a **Talk Box** for these topics and set **guardrails** for success.

Our Talk Box Topics:

Our Structure & Process Involve:

Our Guardrails:

Attachment | *How do we connect?*

Share how we interact with those closest to us – Understand if we move towards or away from others. Identify your **Attachment** style and understand **How** it intersects with your partner.

Our Attachment Styles Include:

How our Styles Interact:

Interdependence | *How we want each other vs. need each other..*

Share what each other needs to be **interdependent** vs. codependent. How can we diversify our connection. Identify your **Dependency** style and understand **How** it intersects with your partner.

Our Dependency Styles Include:

How our Styles Interact:

Repair | *How do we ask for forgiveness?*

Reveal what an **Apology** looks and feels like for one another – Understand what is needed for a **Corrective Experience**.

What I Need to Forgive Involves:

What a Corrective Experience Looks & Feels Like:

Trust | *How do we trust...*

Reveal what **Trust** looks and feels like for one another – Understand what consistency, predictability, & transparency looks like.

Trust Looks and Feels Like:

Consistency, Predictability, & Transparency Looks & Feels Like:

Language | *Words matter...*

Explore how words, labels, language, and character attacks impact one another. Understand what neutral language and non-violent communication look and feel like for one another.

Word Traps:

How Practice Non-Violent Communication:

3rd Variables | *What are the blind spots...*

Everyone experiences life's headwinds. Life's invisible challenges. Experiences unique to them. Understand what the 3rd variables are in each other's life. Understand how it looks and feels like for one another.

3rd Variables:

How We Can Support:

