

## High-Conflict Couple Worksheet

Based on *DBT skills for couples* – by Alan E. Fruzzetti & *Nonviolent Communication* by Marshall Rosenberg

### 1. Identify the Trigger

What happened that led to the conflict or emotional escalation?

**Example:** “They were late picking me up without texting.”

**Your Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2. Label the Emotion(s)

What emotion(s) did you feel in response?

- ☐ Angry
  - ☐ Hurt
  - ☐ Scared
  - ☐ Disgusted
  - ☐ Ashamed
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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### 3. Validate Yourself

What makes sense about your reaction? Identify values or needs

**Example:** “It makes sense I felt frustrated—I value consideration.” “It’s understandable that I was sad, because I was needing connection.”

**Your Validation:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 4. Regulate Before You React

Use a regulating tool before engaging.

- ☐ 4-7-8 Breathing
- ☐ Take a 20-min break
- ☐ Cold water splash or walk

- ☐ Vagus nerve facial massage
  - ☐ Grounding (name 5 things you see, etc.)
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## 5. Validate Your Partner

What might be true for them—even if you disagree?

**Example:** “Maybe they were caught in traffic and didn’t want to text while driving.”

**Your Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6. Communicate With Skill

Use the **DEAR** format:

- **Describe** the facts
- **Express** a feeling and tie it to a need or value
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- **Ask** for what you want in a way that presumes choice for the other person, not a demand ( “Would you be willing...?”)
- **Reinforce** the benefits of change

### **Example:**

“Yesterday, when you didn’t text that you’d be late, I felt anxious and sad. I’d like us to let each other know when things change. It would help me feel more connected.”