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**Demon Dialogues: Identifying the Cycle**

See if you can plot out the steps in the usual negative dance that you find yourself caught in with partner. When you suddenly find that you do not feel safely connected to your partner, what do you usually do?

**When\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I do not feel safely connected to you.** (Fill in the cue that starts up the music of disconnection, e.g., *when you say you are too tired for sex and we have not made love for a few weeks, when we fight about my parenting, when we don’t seem to speak for days.* No big, general, abstract statements or disguised blaming is allowed here, so you can’t say things like *when you are just being difficult as usual.* That is cheating. Be concrete and specific.)

**I tend to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**I move this way in our dance to try to cope with difficult feelings and find a way to change our dance.** (Choose an action word, a verb, e.g. *complain, nag, zone out, ignore you, run, move away, withdraw.*)

**I do it in the hope that\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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(State the hope that pulls you into the dance, e.g. *we will avoid more conflict* or *I will persuade you to respond to me more.*)

**What you do in response is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

(Use an action word, a verb, to describe what you observe your partner do, e.g. defend, ignore, snap, shut down, lecture).

**As this pattern keeps going, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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(Identify a feeling. The usual ones that people can identify at this point are *frustration, anger, numbness, emptiness,* or *confusion.*)

**What I then say to myself about our relationship is**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** (Summarize the most catastrophic conclusion you can imagine, e.g. *You do not care about us, I am not important to you, I can never please you.*)

**My understanding of the circular dance that makes it harder and harder for us to safely connect.**

**The more I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the more you\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are then both trapped in pain and isolation. (**Insert verbs that describe your own and your partner’s moves in the dance.)

**Maybe we can warn each other when this dance begins. We can call it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Seeing this dance is our first step out of the circle of disconnection.** See if you can name your main Demon Dialogue. Some couples call it the Tornado, the Vortex, or the Spiral.

What is a descriptive that fits both of your experience of this negative pattern?

Has this dance always been a part of your relationship or did it get going at a specific time?

Do you think you learned your move in this dance in a previous relationship?

If so, how did it help you in that relationship? Share this with your partner.

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