

Secure Couplehood

RESEARCH-BACKED HABITS TO GROW CLOSER

S

Summarize
before you
respond

I HEAR...

E

Empathize
with
feelings

I CAN SEE...

E

Express
emotions,
not blame

I FEEL...

N

Name
specific
needs

I NEED...

S

Stop old
stories and
regulate

BREATHE

A

Assume
positive
intent

BELIEVE

F

Feel the
fondness
& forgive

GRATEFUL

E

Exit the
defensive
roles

I WILL...

S

Show
affection
daily

GREETINGS

Y

Yes to
bids for
connection

ENGAGE

N

Nurture
the
friendship

CURIOSITY

C

Cherish
each
other

I LOVE...

Over the past 20+ years of counseling couples — and after studying hundreds of relationship books, research findings, and leading therapeutic models such as the Gottman Method, Emotionally Focused Therapy, Imago Relationship Therapy, and attachment science — I have distilled the patterns that consistently make the greatest difference. These 12 habits represent the most powerful practices for building emotional safety, clear communication, and enduring closeness.

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— This resource is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for therapy. —