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...

P

Pause and be present in conflict.

BREATHE

A

Assume the best, even when upset.

BELIEVE

I

Intentionally interrupt negativity.

LET'S...

R

Reconnect through responsibility.

I WILL...

G

Greet with warmth daily.

AFFECTION

R

Recognize strengths, not flaws.

THANK YOU...

O

Offer open-ended questions.

HOW/WHAT...

W

Wonder in ordinary moments.

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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