

## Breaking Negative Relationship Patterns

Couples fall too easily into habitual negative patterns of thinking and behaving, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Use the following prompts to reflect on negative behavior and plan what can be said in the future to stop it.

### Step one

Reflect on a recent situation where the couple felt they had fallen into a negative pattern of behaving or responding:

Situation:	
What did you do?	
How did you feel?	

### Step two

Think about what you could say to your partner to *hit the brakes* and avoid repeating unhelpful and negative behavior, such as saying:

*I'm feeling angry, can I take a breath?*

*I think we are repeating our hold patterns; what are we doing wrong?*

*I'm being critical; I don't want to.*

### Step three

Think of an occasion (this may follow sometime after steps one and two) where you broke the cycle and how you did it:

Situation:	
What did I do?	
How did I feel?	

Remember that reflecting with kindness and self-compassion on where you went wrong can help change future behavior.

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