

TWO RELATIONSHIP EXERCISES **from Q&A with Dr. John Gray**

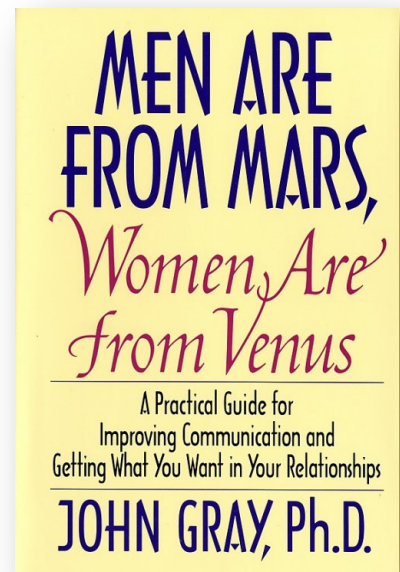
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EXERCISE 1: How to use Hurt Feelings & Resentment for Personal Growth

Instead of holding hurt feelings against your partner, you can use them to grow by...

1. ...understanding that he/she did not mean to hurt you or “do this to you.” It was the situation — that you equally participated in — that hurt you. *Taking personal responsibility includes not just what you contributed to the situation, but also your reaction to it and how you feel.*
2. ...choosing to think of what you wish he/she would do as *your preference*, instead of thinking about it as making a demand or a *must-do*.

Here’s why: When you’re focused on your “preferences,” you don’t feel as deeply hurt by things. You may feel disappointed, but you can let that go much more easily. **Remember: You can only let go of hurt and resentment if you choose to. It’s not that simple, but it is a necessary step.**



Let Go of Hurt Feelings and Resentment with This Technique

To really let go of hurt feelings, your intention must be: “*I want to let go of this hurt because it is getting in the way of love. It is not who I am, how I want to be, or my true self.*” This is the foundation. Then, you have to do the work of actually processing those emotions.

In processing your emotions, you are moving the feelings from the back part of your brain to the middle and then into the front part of your brain where you can release it.

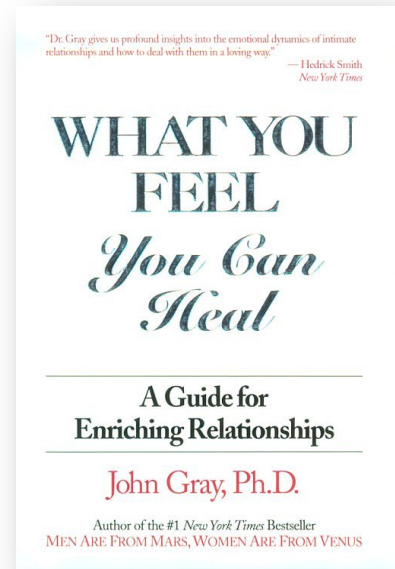
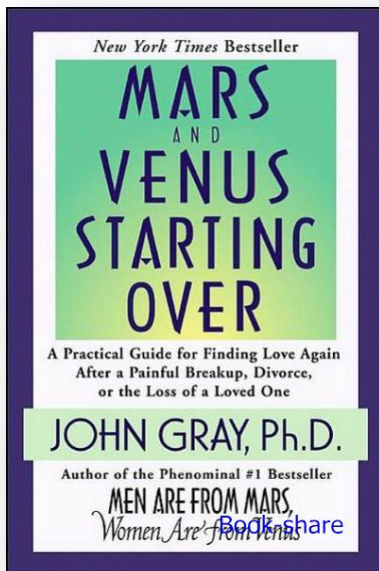
- The back part of your brain is where you’re feeling hurt and scared.
- The middle part is where you’re feeling angry, sad, and afraid.
- The front part is where you’re feeling simply frustrated, disappointed, or concerned.

Once you’ve processed your feelings, it’s much easier to move forward and communicate with a clear mind.

Dr. John Gray has written many books on how to process feelings. The simplest is [What You Feel You Can Heal](#), and we'd also recommend [Mars And Venus Starting Over](#) for when you feel deeply resentful or hurt from a huge loss.

Finally, a journaling exercise:

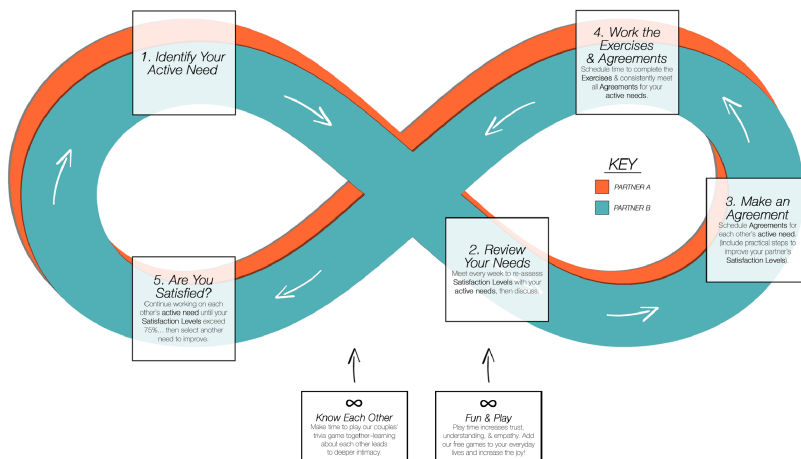
- Write down all of your feelings of hurt, anger, fears, regrets, and any shame for the mistakes you've made.



- Write down what is working about the relationship. What do you appreciate about the relationship, and what do you love about your partner?
- Finally, get in touch with what it is that you want and write that down, too. What do you wish for? This will help you not only process your emotions but also get clear on your preferences.

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EXERCISE 2: The *FEELING* Letter

You should use this technique to get past your anger when your partner has really upset you. The exercise is simple to understand—not so easy to do! You write two separate letters, then *feel* your way to a resolution:

1. Write a letter from you to your partner
2. Then, write a letter from your partner to you
3. Lastly, reflect on the letters until you are ready to forgive

STEP #1: Write a letter from you to your partner

Many men have a tendency to cope with feelings by first thinking about them, while many women prefer to talk aloud to sort them out. This fundamental conflict can be resolved using the Feeling Letter technique. It is particularly helpful for women to get in touch with their feelings at those times when their partner is not wanting to talk and there is no one else to talk to. When a woman has to wait a long time to talk about her feelings, frustration builds up and then when she does talk she is so upset that her partner can't listen without feeling blamed, mistrusted or attacked. (Men may also react this way as well.) We recommend that men use the Feeling Letter technique for those times when thinking about what's bothering them doesn't bring them back to feeling their loving feelings. Whenever you feel resentful or annoyed use this technique.

Remember: you never share these letters with your partner!! The whole idea is to get in touch with the deeper wishes, desires and wants underlying our feelings of anger, hurt, sadness or fear. This ultimately leads us to the powerful healing place of forgiveness—of others and of ourselves).

The purpose of a Feeling Letter is not to dump criticism, resentment, and judgment on your partner, anybody else, or even on yourself. It's not written to try to change or correct them, nor to point out their inadequacies. If used in this way, it will not work. It works only when it's written for you to feel more loving (remember: you don't ever send this letter to them—it's strictly an exercise to help you work through your own issues).

On the next page you'll find the beginnings of a sample letter, as well as a series of questions to help you process what you're really *feeling* about the argument you had with your partner. You can fill it out, or just use it as a guide as you write your letter.

Dear _____,

I am writing you this letter to release my resentment and negative emotions, and to discover and express the positive feelings that you deserve. I am also writing this letter to ask for your support without demanding it.

Level 1: ANGER and BLAME (2 minutes)

I don't like it when...

I resent...

I feel frustrated when...

I feel angry...

I feel furious...

I want...

Level 2: SADNESS and HURT (2 minutes)

It hurts because...

I feel disappointed because...

I feel sad when...

I feel unhappy because...

I wish...

Level 3: FEAR and INSECURITY (2 minutes)

I feel worried...

I feel afraid because...

I feel scared...

I need...

Level 4: REMORSE and APOLOGIES (2 minutes)

I apologize that...

I feel embarrassed...

I am sorry for...

I am willing to....

Level 5: LOVE, UNDERSTANDING, GRATITUDE, and FORGIVENESS (2 minutes)

I love you because...

I appreciate...

I realize...

I forgive you for...

I would like...

I trust...

Thank you for listening to my feelings.

I love you,

STEP #2: Write the *RESPONSE* letter

In his book *How to Get What You Want and Want What You Have*, John Gray adds a wonderful addition to his Feeling Letter technique: After writing your initial letter, write a “response to The Feeling Letter.” This is a letter written back to you from the person you just wrote to in your original feeling letter.

In the response letter, write everything you would like to hear from that person that would make you feel understood, loved and cared for. Write down the ideal response, even if it seems selfish or unrealistic. The whole idea is to get in touch with the deeper wishes, desires and wants underlying our feelings of anger, hurt, sadness or fear. This ultimately leads us to the powerful healing place of forgiveness—of others and of ourselves.

The response letter has five major categories and within each category, you can use the suggested sentence stems to express your deeper feelings. The categories are:

Paragraph 1 (Apology)

Please accept my apology for...

I’m sorry...

I apologize that...

I never meant to...

Paragraph 2 (Forgiveness)

Please forgive me...

Can you forgive me for...

Please pardon my...

Paragraph 3 (Understanding)

I’ve come to realize...

I now understand...

Paragraph 4 (Promises)

I want you to...

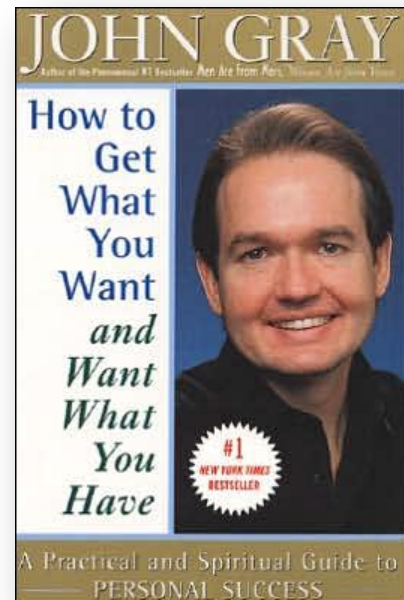
I promise to...

Paragraph 5 (Love)

I love you...

I care for you so much and...

You mean the world to me and...



STEP 3: Getting to FORGIVENESS

Now we're at the most important part: forgiveness. It's always the most difficult thing for some people to do, but now that you've reflected and analyzed your emotions, it's time for forgiveness.

Forgiveness becomes easy when...

1. ...they have apologized for their contribution to the issue
2. ...you feel you have been understood
3. ...you feel that your partner does deeply care for you and your feelings
4. ...you feel loved

You can journal this step if that helps you process things better, but you can also simply think through the following points—the bottom line is that you work through this step until you feel complete forgiveness and you feel *that loving feeling* for your partner once again.

Respond to these questions, take as long as you need:

If all of the things you wrote in the RESPONSE LETTER actually happened...

- How would that make you feel?
- And how would it make you feel towards your partner?

One more thing about love...

Now that you've completed these exercises, we just wanted to leave you with one more word from Dr. John about inner love vs. love from others.

When we experience inner love within ourselves, our co-dependency and romantic love (which is largely conditional) disappears and true unconditional love blossoms. We then have inexhaustible love to give that will eventually improve and sustain all kinds of relationships.

TIP: Try doing advanced mediation or prayer techniques to start experiencing true inner love within yourself.