

Cultivating Connections

Marriage Conference 2021

Apostolic Christian Counseling & Family Services

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Flourishing as a Pattern

DESCRIPTION:

We all create patterns and cycles in our marriages. These patterns have the ability to strengthen us or to lead us to areas of disconnect and hurt. Learn how to identify these patterns in our marriages and shift them into areas of strength.

Outline

What is a cycle?

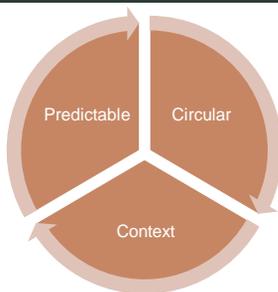
What is your marriage cycle?

What is your individual cycle?

Ephesian s 4:15-16

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

What is a cycle?



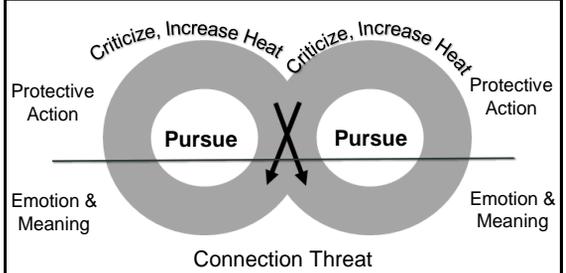
Why is it important to understand your cycle?

- The focus is on relationship.
- Let go of “trying harder” and actively seek to increase safety.
- Understand triggering events in context.
- Increased compassion for spouses' longings and distress.

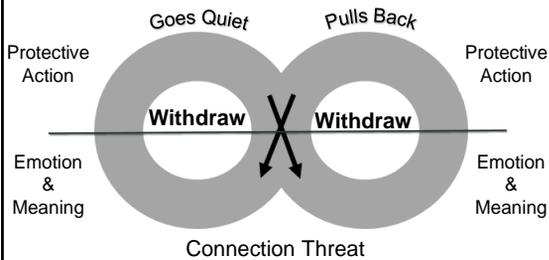
CYCLES WITHIN MARRIAGE

Concepts adapted from Scott Wolley (2009) and Bright Star Marriage Blog, Ted Harro

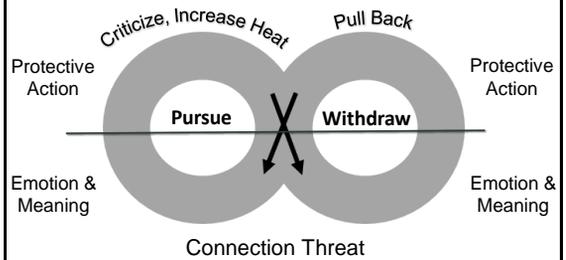
Marriage Cycle: Pursue - Pursue



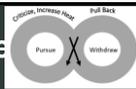
Marriage Cycle: Withdraw - Withdraw



Marriage Cycle: Pursue - Withdraw



Pursue – Withdraw Example



Jim: "I think often of pleasing her. I want her to be satisfied with me. However, it doesn't work. She wants everything to be perfect before we go to church on Sunday. I try my best to clean up, help with kids, but then it just somehow falls apart. It is never perfect enough. We end of leaving the house not speaking to each other."

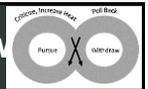
Sally: "We weren't speaking because you don't listen – you were out cleaning the garage when I needed help. That is why I went out to garage irritated and yelled because we were going to be late for church."

Jim: [shaking his head] "I went to the garage to get away from the constant pestering and maybe clear my head before church."

Sally: "Right. If I didn't come out there and yell at you, you would have stayed hiding in the garage, leaving me by myself to handle everything alone. If I don't make you do it nothing happens."

CREATED FOR CONNECTION: THE "HOLD ME TIGHT" GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN COUPLES (JOHNSON & SANDERFER, 2016)

Cycle: Pursue - Withdraw



Predictable

- Each spouse takes familiar stances in cycle which leads to predictable cycle.

Circular

- Pursuing in response to withdraw and withdraw in response to pursuing.

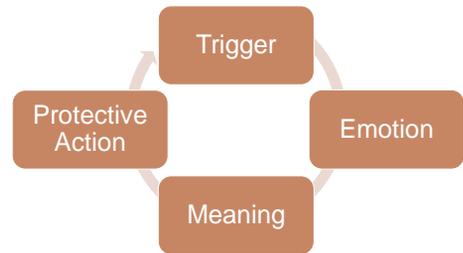
Context

- Sally's pursuit makes sense in relationship, as does Jim's withdraw.

CYCLE WITHIN SELF

Concepts Adapted From Becoming An Emotionally Focused Therapist: The Workbook (Johnson, Et Al., 2005), & The Leading Edge Podcast In EFT, Dr. Ryan Rana & Dr. James Hawkins

Cycle Within Self: TEMP



Cycle Within Self: Pursue

Trigger

- Spouse pulls away, shuts down, or misses bid for connection.

Emotion

- Hurt, alone, invisible, disconnected, not important, desperate.

Meaning

- Spouse is never there.
- I do it myself and just take care of things on my own.
- It is like we are roommates.
- I am way down on the list for my spouse.

Protective Action

- Activate!

Cycle Within Self: Withdraw

Trigger

- Feeling criticized, attacked, controlled or badgered.

Emotion

- Inadequate, fear of failure, rejected, overwhelmed, numb, shame, judged.

Meaning

- I never get it right.
- I don't know what I feel – I am lost / confused.
- Spouse gives me look and I am paralyzed.
- Spouse never comes near and touches me.

Protective Action

- Deactivate!

Cycle Within Self

PURSUE

- Longing – Seen, Wanted
- Fear – abandonment / overwhelming spouse with needs
- Action – Activate

WITHDRAW

- Longing – Acceptance, Calm Connection
- Fear – not enough, deficient
- Action – Deactivate



Moves in Cycle Dilemma

PURSUE

- Intensely pursue
- Do nothing
- Do "test" or try harder

WITHDRAW

- Show up
- Go away
- Get pushed to anger



Stopping Cycle – Shifting to Vulnerability

Predictable

- Name and begin to identify the cycle as it happens.
“We’re caught in cycle.”

Circular

- Be curious about your triggers, emotions, and meaning that lead to protective behaviors that feed cycle.

Context

- What is it like for your spouse to be in this relationship?
Seek to understand spouses’ protective behaviors in context of relationship and their cycle dilemma.