

Love In Real Life

How Do I Keep Myself From Becoming Defensive?

1. _____

Definition: Any attempt to defend yourself from a perceived attack.

Impact: It shuts down communication, it destroys goodwill, it turns little issues into huge problems.

Key: Defensiveness _____

John 8:48 *The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not rightly say that You are a Samaritan, and You have a demon?"*

Genesis 3:12 *The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."*

2. _____

a) _____

b) _____

Use the _____

c) _____

1 Corinthians 4:12-13 *We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us. We appeal gently when evil things are said about us.*

I feel _____ Because _____ I need _____

d) Look for the _____

Proverbs 15:31 *If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise.*

e) _____

Proverbs 28:13 *People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.*

Write down what your partner says. Remind yourself that you're listening to your partner because you care about their pain.

What if you see someone getting defensive?

- Use a gentle start up
- Clarify your motives
- Talk more about what you want instead of what went wrong
- Take responsibility for your tone, timing, or aggressiveness

Type of defensiveness	What it sounds like
Denial	"I never said that. That's not what happened."
Repeating ourselves	"I already told you why I did it! How many times do I have to explain?"
Making excuses	"I was just tired. That's why I snapped."
Whining	"Why do I always have to be the one who changes?"
Playing the victim	"After everything I do for you, this is the thanks I get?"
Defending intentions not acknowledging impact	"I was only trying to help, so you shouldn't be upset."
Using an apology to justify ourselves	"I'm sorry, but you caught me at a bad time."
Exaggerated self-condemnation	"Fine. I'm a terrible spouse. Apparently, I can't do anything right."
Minimize the issue	"It wasn't that big of a deal. You're making too much of it."
Sarcasm	"Oh, right—because you never make mistakes."
Dredging up the past	"What about last month when you forgot our anniversary?"
Counterattacking	"Well, you're not perfect either! You do the same thing."
Shifting blame	"I wouldn't have raised my voice if you hadn't kept pushing me."
Righteous indignation	"How dare you accuse me of being inconsiderate!"
Responding to a complaint with a complaint	"You're upset that I didn't do the dishes? I'm upset that you never help with the laundry."
Argue over details	"I was 15 minutes late, not 20. Get your facts straight."