

Conflict Resolution Post-Mortem Worksheet for Couples

Objective:

This worksheet is designed to help couples reflect on arguments constructively, reducing defensiveness and fostering growth. Use this tool to better understand each other's needs, triggers, and feelings, creating a stronger, more resilient relationship.

Instructions:

1. **Find a Quiet, Comfortable Setting:** Sit down together in a space where you both feel safe and undisturbed. Make sure you're both calm and open to the discussion.
 2. **Set an Intention:** Agree to approach this post-mortem with empathy, respect, and a focus on personal growth, rather than blame.
 3. **Use "I" Statements:** This worksheet encourages reflection on your own actions and reactions. Practice saying "I felt..." or "I noticed..." to reduce defensiveness.
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Step 1: Reflect on the Argument

Take turns answering these questions, focusing on your individual experience and emotions:

- What emotions was I feeling before, during, and after the argument?
 - What past experiences or beliefs may have intensified my reaction?
 - Was there a personal need or boundary I felt was being overlooked or challenged?
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Step 2: Identify Triggers and Reactions

Explore the specific moments that led to the escalation of the argument:

- What specific words, actions, or tones triggered a strong reaction in me?
 - Did I notice a moment when my emotions began to intensify?
 - How did I respond? Did I interrupt, raise my voice, or withdraw?
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Step 3: Acknowledge Your Role

Take ownership of your contribution to the conflict.

- How might my actions or words have impacted my partner's response?
 - Did I make assumptions about my partner's intentions? If so, what were they?
 - What unspoken expectations or needs did I have during the argument?
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Step 4: Recognize Patterns and Lessons

Consider any recurring themes or takeaways from this argument.

- Does this argument remind me of past conflicts? What patterns do I notice?
 - What did I learn about myself and my partner through this experience?
 - What could I do differently next time to improve communication?
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Step 5: Create an Action Plan Together

End with mutual commitments to support future growth.

- What actions can I take to communicate my needs more effectively in the future?
 - How can I better listen to my partner without interrupting or assuming?
 - What steps can we take together to avoid similar conflicts in the future?
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Commitment to Growth

Together, write down one or two specific commitments each of you will make to prevent similar conflicts in the future. Use positive, actionable language:

- **Example:** "I will pause and take a deep breath before responding when I feel triggered."
- **Example:** "I will express my needs calmly rather than letting them build up."

My Commitment:

Partner's Commitment:

Additional Resources

For further support in relationship growth, consider these trusted resources:

- **Gottman Institute:** www.gottman.com
 - **American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT):** www.aamft.org
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Final Thoughts

Remember, the goal of this worksheet is not to place blame but to foster understanding, accountability, and mutual growth. By completing a post-mortem after arguments, you're committing to a healthier, more connected relationship based on empathy, respect, and love.