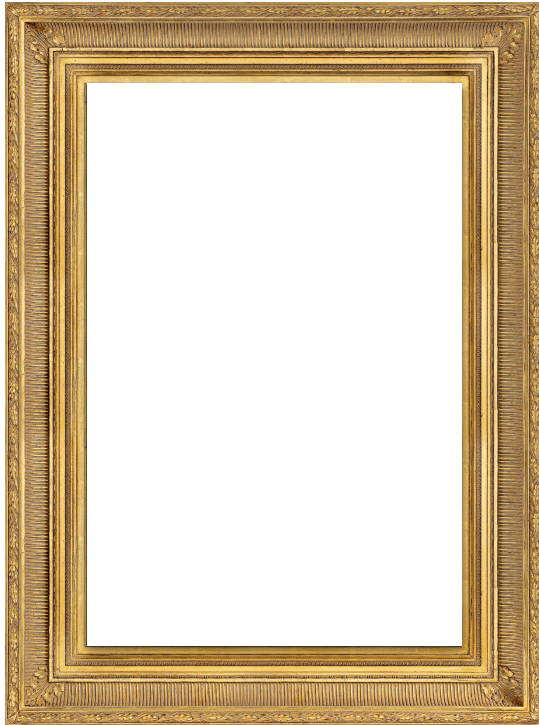




SESSION
11

Partner Values

Draw a picture of what your ideal partner looks like.



What would your ideal partner's voice be like?

What style of clothing would they wear?

In our society, the focus in new relationships is most often about what a potential partner looks like. While physical attraction and how someone presents themselves is relevant, it tells us very little about whether someone will be a good partner or how they will treat us.

Someone's values will tell us more about what sort of partner they will be than how they look. Instead of solely thinking about appearances, how can we discover what their values are and how well they measure up to what we would like a new partner to be like?

Working out what someone's values are takes time. It involves observing their behaviour and how they respond to challenging or difficult situations, what they prioritise and how they make us and other people around them feel. But first, we need to think about what values we want in a partner.

Use this space to reflect on any thoughts or feelings you have about this.



Partner Values

This is a comprehensive list of values. Start by highlighting the top ten values you would like to see in a partner. Then choose your top five values from that list.

Acceptance	Common sense	Discipline	Freedom	Individuality	Meaning	Respect	Support
Accountability	Communication	Effectiveness	Friendship	Innovation	Motivation	Responsibility	Surprise
Accuracy	Community	Efficiency	Fun	Insightfulness	Openness	Results-oriented	Sustainability
Achievement	Compassion	Empathy	Generosity	Inspiring	Optimism	Riskiness	Talent
Adaptability	Connection	Empower	Goodness	Integrity	Order	Satisfaction	Thoughtfulness
Altruism	Consistency	Endurance	Grace	Intelligence	Passion	Security	Timeliness
Ambition	Contentment	Energy	Gratitude	Intensity	Patience	Self-reliance	Tolerance
Assertiveness	Contribution	Enjoyment	Greatness	Intuitiveness	Peace	Selflessness	Tradition
Attentiveness	Control	Enthusiasm	Growth	Irreverence	Persistence	Sensitivity	Transparency
Balance	Conviction	Equality	Happiness	Joy	Playfulness	Significance	Tranquility
Boldness	Cooperation	Ethical	Hard work	Justice	Poise	Silence	Trustworthiness
Bravery	Courage	Excellence	Harmony	Kindness	Power	Simplicity	Truth
Calmness	Courtesy	Experience	Health	Knowledge	Presence	Skillfulness	Understanding
Capability	Creativity	Exploration	Honesty	Leadership	Productivity	Smartness	Unity
Carefulness	Curiosity	Expressive	Honour	Learning	Professionalism	Solitude	Victory
Certainty	Decisiveness	Family	Hope	Logic	Prosperity	Spirituality	Vision
Charity	Dependability	Fame	Hospitality	Love	Purpose	Spontaneity	Wealth
Cleanliness	Determination	Fearlessness	Humility	Loyalty	Reason	Stability	Welcoming
Comfort	Devotion	Feelings	Imagination	Mastery	Recreation	Status	Wisdom
Commitment	Dignity	Focus	Independence	Maturity	Reflective	Strength	Wonder



Partner Values

"Doubt is a killer. You just have to know who you are and what you stand for." Jennifer Lopez

Top Ten Values in a new partner:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Top FIVE Values in a new partner

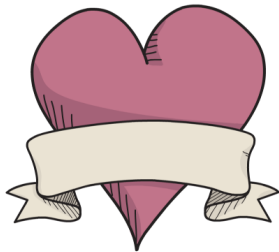
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

After identifying the top 10 and top 5 values you want in a partner, turn back to the values you identified for yourself in Session 8 (page 100) and compare the values that you chose for yourself with the ones you are seeking in a partner.

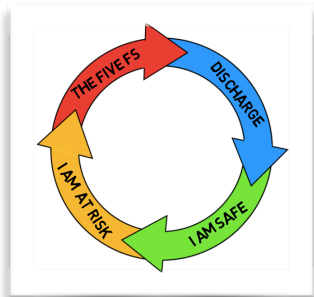
Have you chosen most of the same values for yourself as for the ideal partner?

What conclusions can you gather about your values and those you want in a new partner?

After doing this exercise, do you now think that it is more important to identify what values a potential partner may have?



The Stress Cycle



We often hear people say they want to know how to “deal with their stress”. But what science shows is that stress is a cycle.

This is the stress cycle. In order to deal effectively with stress we need to ask, “how do I complete the stress cycle?”

The cycle starts when we’re safe. Stressors in life lead us to be at risk. There are acute stressors, including car accidents, rape, grief, job loss and divorce, and chronic stressors, like workplace difficulties, parenting, financial pressure, studying or the challenges of coping with trauma. Chronic stressors are ongoing.



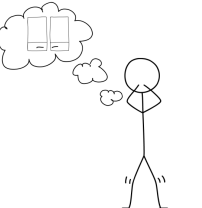

In order to deal with the risks these stressors cause, our body moves into fight, flight, freeze, flop, or friend. Our adrenaline and cortisol shoot up.

Our heart rate, respiration rate and blood pressure rise. Our immune and digestive functioning is suppressed (which is why chronic stress can lead to stomach problems and autoimmune disorders), our pupils dilate and we shift to a vigilant state.

Once our body has responded, we need to discharge the stress. In nature, when a mouse is caught by a cat, it plays dead in order to survive. This is a freeze or flop response and happens with lots of animals. If the predator loses interest or is distracted, the prey will escape, shaking and juddering as it runs away. This shaking is known as “self-paced termination”, and enables the mouse to shake off the increase in adrenaline and cortisol, and recover from the trauma. In humans and domestic animals, self-paced termination doesn’t happen naturally: we have to create ways for it to take place.

There are other barriers we face as humans to discharging stress and completing the stress cycle. These include:

- That the body is not designed to be kept in an ongoing state of stress, as is the case for chronic stressors.
- Western culture with its “keep calm and carry on” attitude often leaves people feeling they are not allowed to admit things are difficult or take time to complete the cycle.
- The stressors can feel so overwhelming, that making space for them can leave us feeling scared that we will be swallowed up by them.
- Women particularly are socialised not to trust our bodies, so we may ignore the stress and try to keep going.
- Discharging the stress may involve being honest with those around us, requiring us to express feelings which may feel unsafe or socially inappropriate.

 <p>In a friend response we may become a peace maker or try to fix the situation without processing our own feelings; sacrificing our own needs so others feel okay.</p>	 <p>In a fight response we will become irritable, angry, annoyed and frustrated.</p>	 <p>In a flight response we may feel terror, becoming fearful and anxious. Or we could be in denial about the issue which is another way of running away from it.</p>	 <p>In a freeze or flop response we will become depressed and unable to move forward.</p>
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**CHRONIC STRESSORS
WESTERN CULTURE
KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON
OVERWHELMING
DON'T TRUST OUR BODIES
SOCIAL INHIBITIONS**



The Stress Cycle

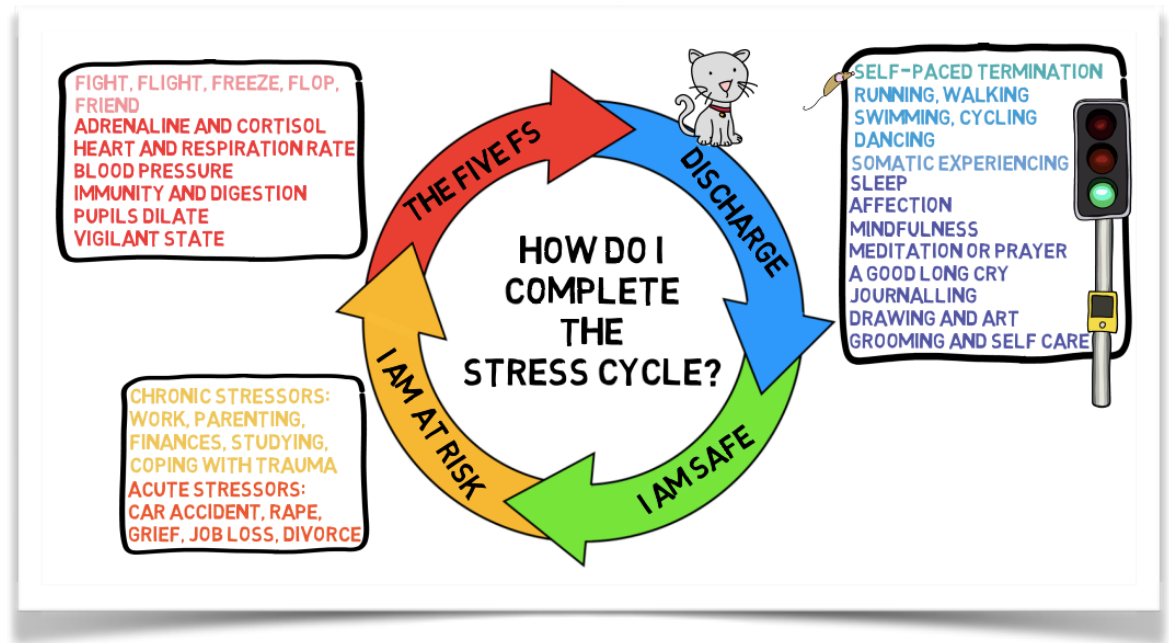
However, unless we make space to discharge the stress it will remain in our bodies. But it doesn't have to!

Academic Emily Nagoski explains that:

Whether through running, walking, swimming, cycling, dancing; physical exercise will make a huge difference and allows the body to discharge the stress. And there's even a therapy that enables this to happen called somatic experiencing.

Other things that will help in discharging the stress include: sleep, receiving and giving affection, mindfulness, meditation or prayer, having a good long cry that leaves us feeling drained but like we have got stuff out, journaling, drawing and art, grooming and self-care.

By taking time to do these activities and recognising they are necessary for completing the stress cycle we are able to move back into knowing we are safe. It can take time, energy and support to do it, but we can move forward. We can complete the stress cycle.



"We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better." J.K. Rowling

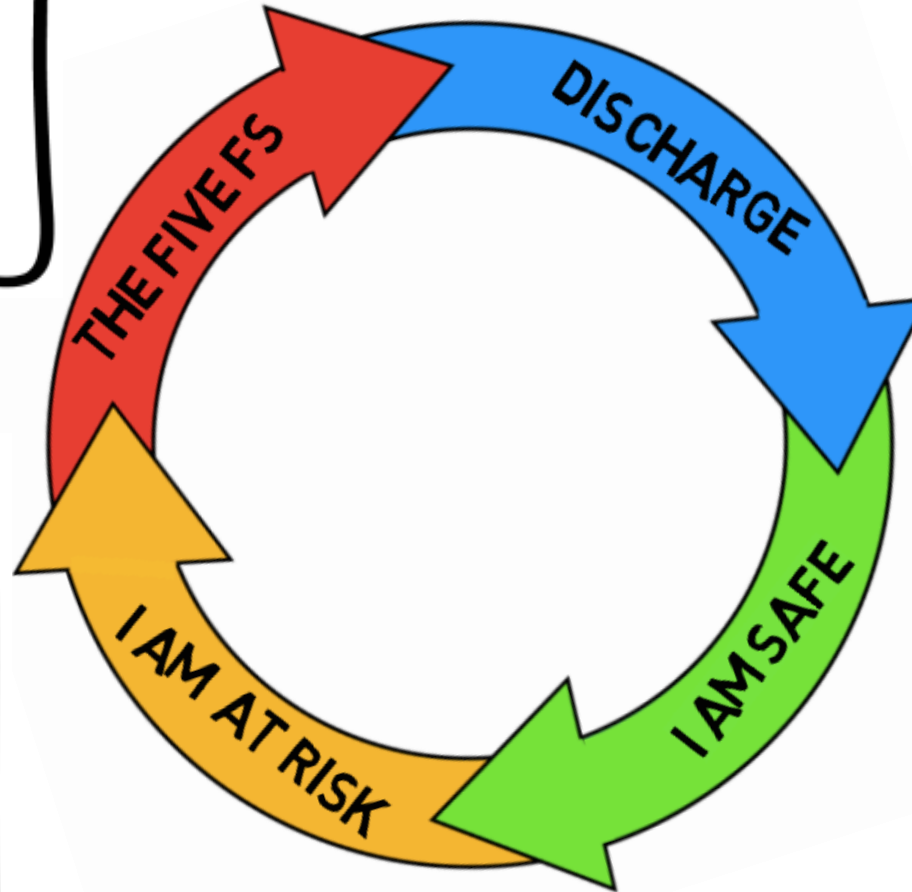
The Stress Cycle Exercise

2. Consider what your dominant response to stressors is.

Complete the Stress Cycle for your own situation

3. What barriers are preventing you from discharging stress?













1. Identify some of the chronic and acute stressors in your life.



4. What activities could you do to discharge stress?

Love Bombing

Myrtle met Herman online and they agreed to go out for a drink. Myrtle finds Herman very physically attractive. During the first date, Herman began sharing how his mother died when he was three and how this has deeply affected him. After the date, Herman begins sending Myrtle long messages telling her how beautiful she is and how much he cares about her. He wants to video call her constantly and asks her when she will let him meet her daughter.

ACTION 		ACTION 	
OBSTACLE 		OBSTACLE 	
OVERCOME 		OVERCOME 	
ACTION 		ACTION 	
OBSTACLE 		OBSTACLE 	
OVERCOME 		OVERCOME 	

In the table write:

1. Actions Myrtle could take to change things for the better.
2. Obstacles Herman might put in Myrtle's way to prevent her achieving change.
3. Ways Myrtle could overcome Herman's obstacles.

Love Bombing

Psychology professor Margaret Singer popularised the term Love Bombing in 1996 in describing how cults groom potential victims.

First used to describe the tactics of religious group the Moonies in the 1970s, Love Bombing is a technique that has been used in both negative and positive ways.

Clinical psychologist Dale Archer explains: "Love bombers are manipulators who seek and pursue targets. They're like emotional vampires, because they use attention and affection to build trust, as a means to maintain control, and end up sucking the emotion and joy for life right out of their partners."

Love Bombing is the first stage of The Nice One. His intention is to overwhelm a potential partner with positive experiences which prevent them having space to analyse the reality of the relationship.

High Vulnerability

The love bomber rapidly shares their inmost feelings, worst traumas, and deepest hopes, needs and dreams. This tactic may seem very attractive, particularly when men are stereotyped as being unemotional and closed. However, they will expect their openness and vulnerability to be reciprocated. "Lovingly" interrogating us, he will want to know everything about us. Feeling positive, our defences may come down and we will share deeply personal information, including our own secrets and deepest thoughts and feelings. These can be used against us later on.

Forever love

Quickly talk about the relationship being forever, the love bomber will immediately present the relationship as long-term, swiftly suggesting cohabitation, engagement, marriage or a baby. They tell us that no one understands them as much as we do and that they have never felt so close to anybody. These messages are normalised by popular culture in songs and films which portray love as highly intense and all consuming.

Do you recognise the Love Bombing behaviours?

Yes

No

Not sure

Extreme Flattery

Idealising us, they will see us as perfect and shower us with compliments, but often in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable.

Monopolising time and energy

They will take up all our time and energy so that we don't have time to think or process what we want or how the relationship is progressing.

Inappropriate Gifts

There may either be too many gifts or they may be gifts that are far too expensive when we haven't known them very long.

Constant Communication

In person and/or through online communications, messages and voice and video calls.

Use this space to write or draw your thoughts on Love Bombing.

Dating Calendar

Dating and relationships can often feel like a matter of chance. But, we can choose to be intentional in the way we form intimate relationships. Instead of rushing into them, or letting them run away with us, we can choose to keep control of how things progress. One of the ways to enable us to do this is to consider how we would like a relationship to be before we meet someone. How quickly would we like to move the relationship on? What type of relationships do we want? If we put some thought into this, we can stay accountable to what we want, even when all the romantic and sexual feelings in us leave us feeling we can't help but move things forward. We can make choices and decisions based on our values and our own best interests, and the best interests of those affected by our relationships (children, friends, family members).

One day	
One week	
One month	
Three months	
Six months	
Nine months	
One year	
Eighteen months	
Two years	
Three years	
Never	

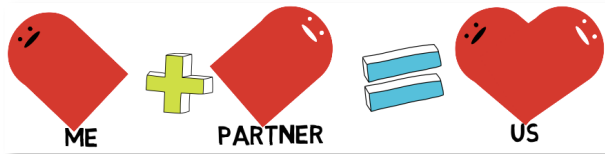
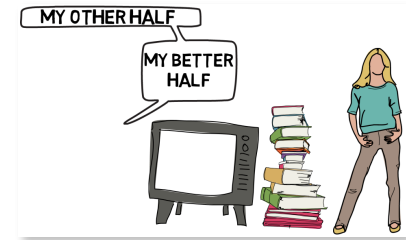
Place within this table how quickly after meeting someone you would be willing to do the following:

- First date
- Kiss
- Have sexual contact
- Have sex
- Change social media status
- You stay at their house
- Them stay at your house
- Meet:
 - Their parents
 - Your parents
 - Their children
 - Your children
- Go on holiday together
- Move in together
- Share a pet
- Get engaged
- Buy large joint purchases (e.g. car)
- Buy a house
- Have a baby
- Have a joint bank account
- Get married



I Am Whole

This is Vera. All her life she's been surrounded by messages that she's not a whole person. Fairy tales told her she needed a prince to save her. TV series, films and songs are mostly about intimate relationships. Her friends and family members refer to their partners as their other half or their better half. But is Vera only half a person if she's single? That's what all these messages seem to be saying.



The formula for relationships that most of us get taught is that I'm a half, my partner is a half, and that equals the whole that is us. But I'm a whole person and so is Vera. We all are. If I can be whole in a relationship, how do I learn to like myself for who I am? How do I end a bad relationship, if I'll only be half a person on my own? This formula is messed up, it's messing people up, and we need a new formula!

I'm a full person. And when I start a relationship it's with another whole person. We don't become complete together - we're already complete. Instead, we add another element to the two of us: our relationship. So instead of me plus my partner equalling us, it's me plus my partner *plus* us! A relationship is two whole people and one whole relationship.

If a relationship ends, it doesn't rip away half of us. The end of a relationship can be painful, and a huge change, but we don't lose ourselves. It's just that a situation we've been used to changes and we go back to being a one, and not a two. And that is okay!



Use this space to write or draw how living in a world where being single is seen as a negative thing has affected you.

Do you feel you can be whole if you are single?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you ticked yes, have you always felt that you could be single and still be a whole person?

- Yes
- No
- I ticked no

"To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else." Emily Dickinson



Notes

