

WINNERS	RUNNERS-UP
<p>Give the benefit of the doubt <i>Winners give their partners the benefit of the doubt. They remember their partner's good qualities, generally see their partners as good people, and think things like "Wow, that was really bad behavior. S/he must be really tired or stressed out to act like that." This assumes that the problem is situational and temporary, not a result of flawed character.</i></p>	<p>Jump to conclusions <i>Runners-Up jump to conclusions about their partner's character when they behave poorly. Instead of trying to give the benefit of the doubt, they think things like, "s/he is so selfish and doesn't care about me at all."</i></p>
<p>Assume good intentions <i>Winners assume their partners have good intentions. Winners truly believe their partners are good people with good intentions. More importantly, they show <u>curiosity</u> in order to try to better understand their partner's intentions, instead of jumping to negative conclusions about their partner's character. They say things like, "Please help me understand why you did that. I'm sure there was a reason, because I know you wouldn't do something like that just to hurt me. What was going on for you?"</i></p>	<p>Assume negative intentions <i>Runners-Up assume their partners have less than good intentions. They question their partner's character, or see them as having malicious or untrustworthy intentions. They approach with skepticism and doubt, rather than curiosity. They say and think things like, "you just want to piss me off, don't you," or "you don't care about me."</i></p>
<p>Manage their own reactions <i>Winners practice recognizing and owning their own emotional reactions. This takes work! Many of us learn from our families that emotions (especially anger, sadness, vulnerability, hurt, fear). are bad, scary, useless, or unnecessary, and that we should avoid them. This is not true! Winners work to identify, understand, feel, and take ownership of their emotional reactions. They do things like acknowledging they are upset, try to understand what the emotion is and where it is coming from, communicate that with their partner, and take steps to regulate (not disown or ignore) their own emotional reactions.</i></p>	<p>Blame partner for their own reactions <i>Runners-Up really struggle with emotional regulation. They believed the messages from their families that emotions are bad/scary/useless/dangerous/unnecessary, and do everything in their power to get rid of, ignore, dismiss, or shut down their own and their partner's emotional reactions (especially anger, sadness, vulnerability, hurt, fear). They do things like blame their partner for their own feelings or avoid situations that may cause these feelings. They say and think things like, "it's stupid to feel that way," or "you're being ridiculous," or "your bad mood just ruined my day."</i></p>
<p>Kindness <i>Winners treat each other with kindness. Now this doesn't mean they don't get mad or argue – Winners can fight with the best of them! But their general intentions are to treat their partners with kindness and love. Instead of hurling insults, using words to hurt, being violent or aggressive, Winners can talk about their upsets while following all of the above principles, and also being <u>nice</u> to their partner. Make it easier for your partner to be a Winner by being nice: Use manners; say please, thank you, and I love you; and give compliments.</i></p>	<p>Criticism & defensiveness <i>Runners-Up may result to a pattern of criticism and defensiveness. When their partners confront them about something, instead of following Winner principles, they defend themselves first, often lashing out and criticizing their partner. This can look like: A: "You know, you were really mean to me this morning" B: "Oh, screw you, I was not! What about what you said to me?" A: "You know what I meant! You're such a Jerk sometimes!" B: "Well if that isn't the pot calling the kettle black. You're the Jerk, not me!"</i></p>
<p>Make efforts to repair/connect <i>Winners recognize when things have gone sour, or they are disconnected from their partner, and they attempt to repair the disconnection. They may check in and ask how their partner is doing. They may reach out and gently touch their partner's hand during an argument. They apologize. They take steps to maintain the connection in their relationship. This looks like having date nights, "state of the union" conversations, offering encouragement and support, and staying connected even (especially) when they are in conflict.</i></p>	<p>Self-righteous <i>Runners-Up sometimes get caught up in self-defense mode, which can lead to self-righteousness. When they notice a disconnect, instead of reaching out, they decide it's their partner's job and they wait expectantly for the other person to act. Runners-Up believe they are always right, and refuse to back down. They lecture their partners. They usually do these things out of a fear of being vulnerable or rejected, so Winners will see this self-righteousness as such and will respond with kindness, curiosity, and giving the self-righteous partner the benefit of the doubt.</i></p>
<p>Respect self and partner equally <i>Winners have the same high level of respect for both themselves <u>and</u> their partner. They can stand up for themselves and ask for what they need, but they do it without making a big deal about it, and without putting their partner down. This means recognizing your own needs, asking for them, and explaining your case, while <u>at the same time</u>, recognizing and acknowledging your partner's needs and being willing to compromise.</i></p>	<p>Contempt or Shut Down <i>Runners-Up are often so afraid to fail that they put themselves on too high a pedestal. They look down from their "high horse" position with an attitude that says, "I'm better at this than you" or otherwise shows a negative judgmental attitude about their partner. Runners-Up also do the opposite: they can have such a low value on themselves that don't step up to the plate. This can look like shutting down, giving in, or giving up.</i></p>