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Being a Safe Haven and Secure Base

Attachment theory suggests that you develop emotional ties from a young age from the people who are caring for you. Within that are two important aspects of this that we take with us through all of our relationships throughout adulthood.

To start, let's explore how we establish a safe haven and secure base for our partner and ourselves.

Safe Haven refers to someone we can turn to when we are frightened, sick, tired, or bored. Some examples partners give each other support and comfort:

- Listening when the other is worried
- Being attentive when the other is sick
- Helping practically when the other is tired
- Inquiring about your partner's feelings
- Staying engaged patiently when your partner is confused
- Discussing and debriefing events of the day together
- Allowing your partner space and time to decompress
- Expressing concern and/or physical comfort when your partner is sad or hurt

How does my partner give me support, comfort, and encouragement? (Take your time, try to come up with at least one answer)

How could I offer my partner a safe haven in hard times? Think of specific things you do/could do (no matter how small)

If you are struggling with this acknowledge your are feeling blocked on it instead of shifting the focus to your partner's flaws. Past hurts or current anger can make it difficult for us to see the positive ways in which our partners are attempting to respond to us.

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Secure base refers to having a sense of safety that one can be curious, grow, explore, and develop. For example:

- Supporting each other's work and activities
- Asking questions that reflect curiosity in each other's opinions
- Listening to each other's hopes and dreams
- Taking an interest in each other's capabilities and possibilities for growth
- Bolstering each other's confidence and encouragement ("You can do this")

How has my partner encouraged me to grow and develop? (Take your time, try to come up with at least one answer)

How could I support my partner's dreams and aspirations to grow and develop?

Take time to share your answers with your partner using the L-O-V-E Conversation if possible.

Kallos-Lilly, V., & Fitzgerald, J. (2021). *Emotionally focused workbook for couples: The two of Us*. ROUTLEDGE.