

The Relationship Institute

www.therelationshipinstitute.org

The I-to-I Exercise Creating Intimacy through **Tension**

At TRI we have found that using the I-to-I (Initiator-to-Inquirer) Exercise, which was originally developed by Bader & Pearson, is the most powerful and effective way for Long-Term Love Relationship partners to develop strong, healthy Conflict Intimacy.

There are two roles in this exercise. The person who first brings up an issue is the *Initiator*, and then his/her partner is the *Inquirer*.

Reminders for the Initiator

1. Talk about yourself; your goal is to help your partner know your reality
2. Focus on one issue and be specific
3. Pick an issue that is difficult to share
4. Structure your sharing around “**I feel x because of y,**” making sure “x” is an emotion and not a thought
5. Don’t blame your partner; remember, this is about you.
6. The most intimate and important information to share with your partner are the emotions you feel or felt regarding this issue

Reminders for the Inquirer

1. Right now, your view, your opinion and your feelings about the topic your partner is talking about is irrelevant
2. Fight getting defensive; keep reminding yourself that what your partner shares is about him/her; the mantra of the Inquirer is, “It’s not about me, it’s not about me, it’s not about me, etc”
3. Recap what you heard your partner say
4. Be curious; your task is to step into their shoes
5. Ask questions to help you understand your partner, not questions designed to defend yourself or your agenda.
6. Don’t problem solve.