**TUNEUP SESSION**
(Tune up at home every 6 months)

I hope that life is treating you well, that you have had your share of challenges, but not too many. You know that I am obsessed with getting you **results** and **sustaining** the wonderful growth you have done.

Here’s to being there for each other, being nice and having each other’s back. It is us against the problem, not us against each other.

**It is about time for that tuneup, right?** Maybe put it in your phone, set up a notification reminding yourself to do this each year or every six months, just to keep yourselves on track. You don’t need a counselor to review this.

**What do we need to review or audit or check or tune up in our relationship?** I have ideas for that and I am sure that you do as well. Maybe you start with yours and then come do this with me? Oh you want me to go first? I can do that.

***How is your State of the Union coming along?***

Are you still doing it every single week? That tends to be the best prevention for resentment and research has shown that it protects the couple bubble from affairs. You air your grievances with needs language instead of complaints.

***Are you able to look at what you need and ask for your needs to be met?***

***Are you able to come back from an argument without sparking a new argument?***

***Let’s look at some of the goals people set in counseling and maybe you two want to challenge yourselves now.***

I want you to get the **results** that are important to you. “Coming to counseling” is considered a process goal. Let’s look at what coming to counseling can get you.

How do we measure if we were successful in couples counseling?

1. Did you accomplish your goal? (Was your goal specific enough to be able to be measured? Was your goal realistic, given the context?)
2. Were you able to sustain your goal over time?

*Sample Goals:*

\_\_When there was high emotion or conflict in a conversation, we were able to regroup and use Talker/Listener 85% of the time

\_\_When we remembered to use Talker/Listener, we used it correctly more than 50% of the time

\_\_We agreed on a course of action and followed through more than 80% of the time

\_\_We showed affection physically and verbally every day

\_\_We openly talk about finances at least once a month

\_\_We openly talk weekly about our physical and emotional intimacy

\_\_We talk about parenting and discipline, at least monthly

\_\_We openly talk weekly about how we share power in doing the chores

\_\_We openly talk about the impact of work on our relationship, a minimum of monthly

\_\_We openly talk about bed time and meals each week

\_\_We used the State of the Union Talks weekly at least 40 of the 52 weeks in a year

\_\_We were able to successfully use State of the Union 80% of the time when we used it

\_\_We interrupt our own pattern of the 4 horsemen 90% of the time

\_\_We are able to successfully use the antidote to each of the 4 horsemen at least 75% of the time

\_\_When emotions got too high for either one of us to effectively listen, we called a time out for a minimum of 30 minutes - 80% of the time

\_\_When we checked back in after 30 minutes break, we were able to decide, as a team, 70% of the time whether to continue the conversation today or defer it til tomorrow

\_\_We successfully set up at least 7 rituals of connection

\_\_We followed those 7 rituals of connection that we set up 75% of the time

\_\_When we found ourselves gridlocked, at least 50% of the time we looked at the dreams within a conflict, validation, what to compromise and what to not compromise and at least 50 % of the time we were able to move from gridlock to dialogue

\_\_We are able to use softened start up 80% of the time

\_\_Rather than complain to our partner, at least 50% of the time we use needs language instead of complaining

\_\_We use the aftermath of a marital argument 75% of the time after an argument

\_\_We are using the Magic 6 hours a week at least 75% of the weeks (including date night)

\_\_We weekly initiate the discussion of the things that are not going well in the relationship (no longer avoiding) at a rate of 80% or higher

\_\_We are expressing fondness, admiration and appreciation every single day as a way to build our friendship

\_\_When one of us tries to connect with the other and we miss the connection, we increase our directness by saying the equivalent of “I was looking for closeness and connection” 75% or more of the time

\_\_Every week, at a minimum, we are using the language of love of our partner to show the partner love

\_\_When our partner asks for something that I know I do not want to do, we have a conversation about compromise, what is that which we cannot compromise and what area is open for compromise (what percentage? How would you measure this?)

\_\_We consistently and successfully (not specific enough- cannot measure this) use Bayes Rule and Nash Equilibrium when the situation calls for negotiation

\_\_I avoid debate when my partner asks me to listen for understanding 90% of the time

\_\_I initiate conversation 30% or more of the time because my partner asked me to

\_\_I can express my emotions without spewing them, while using needs language 85% of the time

\_\_We prompt ourselves to do what we need to do by putting reminders in our phone (for example a yearly reminder to do the State of the Union, so that it never gets forgotten)

Please set up Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic Goals and give a Timeline for when we will measure them (SMART Goals)

**Goal 1. Conflict/Friendship**

Which one is your focus right now? Are you building friendship with one another or are you reducing the negatives in your relationship? You have to choose one right now and do the other one later.

As a couple, \_\_\_% of the time or more, we will successfully \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When/how will you measure it?

**Goal 2. Feedback Loop and Sustainability of Goal**

As a couple, \_\_\_% of the weeks, we will review our goals during the State of the Union and make necessary adjustments. When/how will you measure it?

**Goal 3. Aspirational Goal- what would we like to see in our relationship to feel a sense of satisfaction and pride in our partnership?**

As a couple, we will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(please make sure it is able to be

measured, so that you know if you got the results you were aspiring to reach)\_\_\_\_\_

Be realistic while you challenge or stretch yourselves to reach it.

When/how will you measure it?

NOTE: If you are truly focused on 3 things, you increase your odds of success. Focus your efforts on the most important things: Conflict reduction or building friendship, process (feedback loop), building the relationship toward something you both value.

***Helpful hints:*** Please make sure that you’re appreciating one other people tend to do more when they feel appreciated.

Talk about your ***needs versus your complaints***. When people complain, they tend to lose the audience.

Remember to ***use softened start*** up rather than coming at the conversation spewing emotion all over your partner, like sneezing on someone. Remember in talker listener that we take turns.

Make sure that you are ***building friendship, not just getting rid of the negative***.

OOOH, or is it time for the two of you to do the workbooks on sacred sexuality? So many couples just don’t make themselves vulnerable and talk about this valuable area. Don’t be average!!

How are you doing with ***updating your rituals of connection***? Make sure that you are building in prompts so you’re not avoiding the necessary conversations.

Before I say goodbye for now, ***remember to clarify*** so that you get better communication and clarity when there is emotion that is running high or when there is conflict. Remember to ***validate*** when you have differences. You ***listen to understand***, not reply and you ***make those sound effects to convey that you get where they are coming from, regardless of whether you agree with their idea***. No judgment, no making assumptions, no trying to persuade them or convert them.

I wish you all the best!