

## Explanations for Partner Behavior Worksheet

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Use this worksheet to assess a relationship event and examine how you process the information about the event. Identify an event where you feelings were hurt, where you felt angry, disappointed, or had some other negative emotional response. After you have identified an event, ask yourself these questions about the event.

Write a Description of the event. (What was happening? What did you notice?)

What were you thinking about that event?

Use the following questions to reflect and write about your explanations for your partner's behavior.

### **Internal vs. External Locus of Control**

Did my partner do/say this because of who s/he is as a person?  
Is his/her behavior because of his/her personality characteristics? Stable/  
unstable.

Is this behavior persistent over time?

Does it happen every time?

## **Intention**

Did my partner intend to do the behavior?

Did they intend the outcome that happened?

## **Controllable vs. Uncontrollable; Voluntary vs. Involuntary**

Do they do it because they want to?

Can they stop doing it if they choose to?

## **Reframe and Refocus:**

Instructions: Go back and rethink the event. Take into account locus of control, stability, intention, and volition. Answer the following questions:

What was their intention here?

Where were they coming from?

What did it mean to them?

What were they feeling?

What was their motive?

Did they want something from you? What was it?

Could it be that they intended something other than what you thought?  
What might they have intended instead?

Let's pretend for a moment that they did not mean what you initially  
thought. What else might they have meant to do or say?

What might they have needed from you?

Is this behavior typical?

### **Connecting Your Explanation of Partner Behavior to Your Feelings and Behavior**

Was your initial response how you would ordinarily interpret, think, and feel about their behavior?

When you interpret your spouse's behavior this way, what do you feel?

What do you usually do when you interpret your partner behavior in a negative light?

How might repeated negative interpretations be affecting your relationship?

What have learned about your own automatic responses?

When we can accurately assess a situation, and use appropriate feelings management skills, we can be proactive in problem solving in a way that meets both partner's needs.

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