



## Checking My Expectations

A simple exercise for managing relationship expectations

**Purpose:** To notice & manage expectations without blaming myself or my partner

**This exercise is especially helpful if you:**

- Feel easily triggered or disappointed
- Think your partner just doesn't get you
- Struggle with unmet emotional needs
- Want closeness but don't know how to get that without overwhelming your partner

**This exercise can help:**

- Slow down emotionally charged reactions before they turn into fights
- Notice needs underneath the expectations
- Reduce silent resentment and pressure building up in the relationship
- Build self-awareness without self-blame
- Support healthier communication and emotional boundaries

**How To Use This Worksheet:**

Think of this worksheet as a check-in with yourself.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Take a deep breath, and go through the sheet step by step.

Be honest about what comes up when you read through the steps.

You can either type/write/mark your responses, or think out loud.

Having a printed sheet in your hand usually helps.

Change requires consistent effort, so keep practicing.

### 1) What just happened?

Simply state what happened without using judgment words

Something my partner did or didn't do that bothered me:

- Didn't react the way I hoped
- Said something that hurt
- Cancelled or changed plans
- Describe what happened:*

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### 2) What was I expecting?

Express what you were hoping for

In that moment, I was hoping my partner would:

- Check in on me
- Say something kind or loving
- Prioritize me
- Understand without me explaining
- React the way *I* would have
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### 3) Where is this expectation coming from?

Be curious about why you expected that from your partner

I expected this because:

- This is what helped me feel better in the past
- It soothes an old fear e.g. being left behind, ignored, controlled, etc.
- I felt insecure or unsure
- I was stressed out
- I thought this is how you show that you care
- I didn't even realize I expected this until now
- I needed -----

#### 4) Quick Check

Use soft words, not harsh or judgmental words

Now that things are a bit calmer, this expectation feels:

- Fair and reasonable
- Understandable, but negotiable
- More about how I'm feeling than what my partner did

#### Questions to ask myself:

*Have I clearly shared with my partner what I need, or am I just hoping that they know?*

*Is this something I can partly give to myself without expecting it solely from my partner?*

#### 4) Next Step

Take some of the pressure off

What would help with this right now?

- Soothe myself first
- Let this go for now
- Talk about it later when I feel more stable
- Remind myself that this issue does not define the relationship

One small thing I could do to show my partner that I still love them:  
e.g. hug them, call them using their cute nickname, etc.

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#### Reminder

- ~My expectations come from my needs*
- ~Not every disappointment means something is wrong*
- ~Understanding myself helps me love without suffocating*

This guide is meant to promote **healthier conversations**. It's not an alternative for therapy.

Want to work on this on a deeper level?

[Begin therapy online](#)