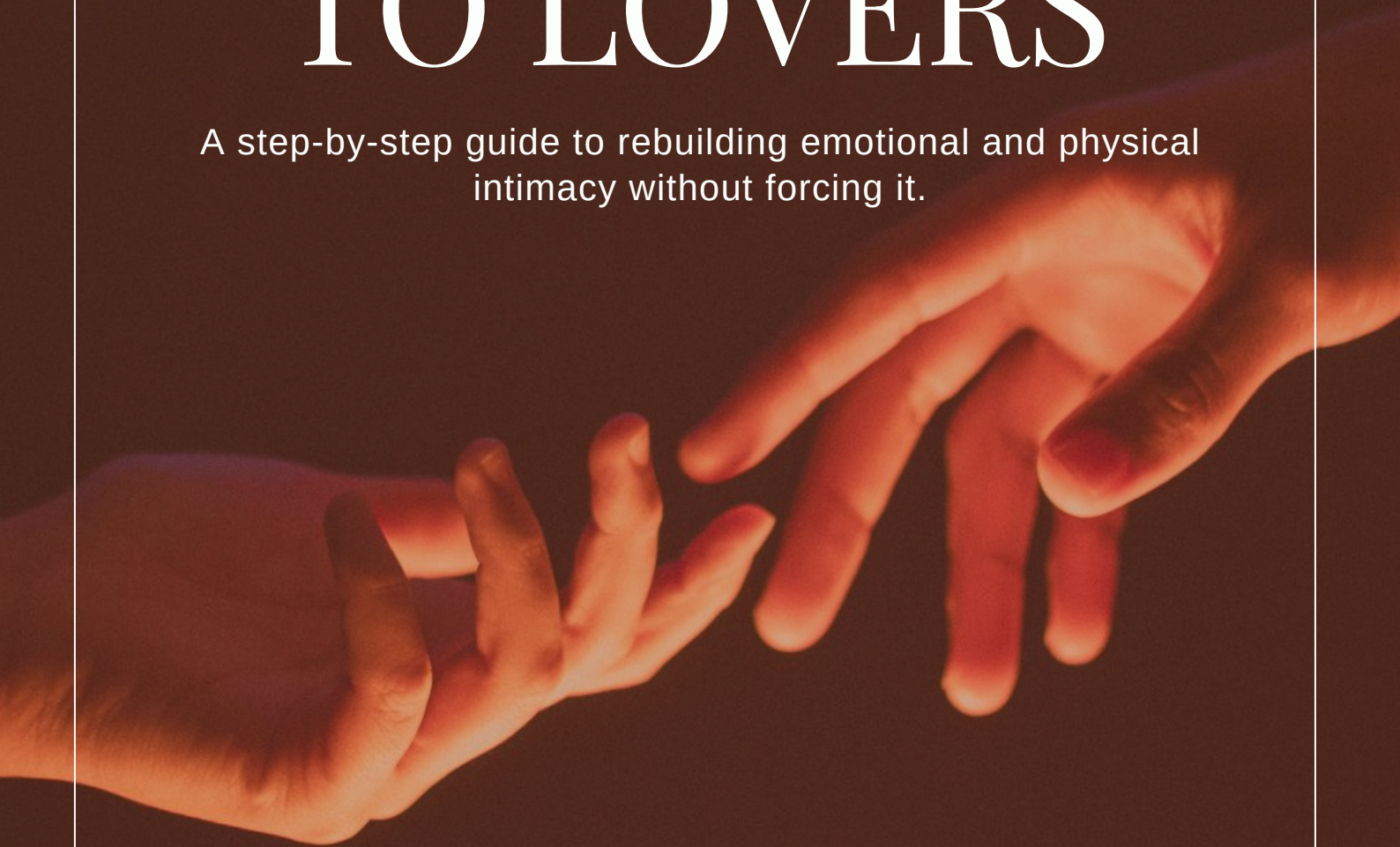


STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

FROM ROOMMATES TO LOVERS

A step-by-step guide to rebuilding emotional and physical intimacy without forcing it.



HEY, I'M APRIL MARIA

Sex and relationships coach and
certified sex educator.



Over the years, I've worked with couples who tell me the same thing:
"We love each other... but it feels like we're just coexisting."

Sound familiar?

Maybe the spark has dimmed, or intimacy has started to feel like an obligation instead of a joy. Maybe the emotional closeness that once came easily now feels out of reach. You're not broken, you're just stuck in a cycle that so many couples fall into, myself included.

This guide is here to help you break that cycle.

Whether you've been together for 2 years or 20, this is your invitation to reconnect — emotionally, physically, and intimately.

Inside, you'll find some insight into what's happening, step-by-step tools, prompts, and real-life practices to shift out of "roommate mode" and into something more connected, more playful, more you two.

Let's bring the spark back, not by scheduling more sex, but by building something deeper.

You in?



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Before we begin...

If you've ever looked at your partner and thought, "We're more like roommates than lovers these days," you're not alone. Nearly every couple hits a season where intimacy fades, communication gets logistical, and desire goes quiet.

You might find yourself having sex for the sake of 'getting the job done' or out of guilt that it's been 3 months and you haven't even touched each other. Don't worry, you are not alone, and we can help shift you from disconnected to a steamy, sensual, sexy connection soon enough!

Before we begin...

It's important to remember that this isn't a sign your relationship is broken; rather, it's a sign it's asking for more attention, intention, and curiosity.

As you work through this guide, I want to invite you into a new mindset, one that centres "us" over "me vs you." This won't always be easy. It might feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar at first. But this shift is what changes blame into teamwork, distance into closeness, and silence into safety.

Lastly, for this shift from roommates to lovers to happen, both of you need to...

1. Be on board with working through this guide TOGETHER.
2. Both put in the work to help create change.
3. Both be able to speak up & acknowledge when you need to go back a step or two.

Let's get started!





01. Why You Feel Like Roommates, Not Lovers.

The shift from passion to roommates doesn't happen overnight, and it's not anyone's fault. No one hands us a manual for how to navigate love, life, and long-term relationships in ways that centre communication, curiosity, and care.

Most of us were never taught how to recognise disconnection, let alone repair it without blame or assumptions. I bet you've thought the disconnect and lack of sex is 'They just don't want me anymore' rather than asking them what's really going on in their life.

But here's the thing, if you're finding yourselves more focused on chores than cuddles, or logistics than love, you're not alone. Below are just a few reasons that might explain why it's happening, and what you can begin to notice and gently shift.

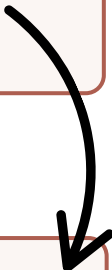
Let's break it down so we can come from a place of knowledge, not assumptions.



What Might Be Happening...

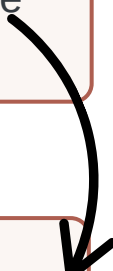
1. THE EMOTIONAL DISCONNECT

Life gets busy. Work stress, family obligations, and routines. Conversations become surface-level. Instead of asking How are you really? We default to just getting through the day. Over time, emotional intimacy fades, not because love disappears, but because you stop prioritising emotional closeness.



2. THE ROUTINE TRAP

Humans crave safety, but safety can turn into sameness. When you stop trying new things and know how every evening will play out, the relationship becomes predictable... and passion doesn't thrive in predictability. You fall into the rhythm of survival, not connection. (Read *Mating in Captivity* by Esther Perel & thank me later).



3. NO SPACE FOR DESIRE TO BREATHE

Desire needs space and time to build. It lives in the unexpected, the playful, the unpredictable. But when you're exhausted, touched out from kids or work, or overstimulated by screens and schedules, there's no space left for sensuality to grow. You can't desire when you feel emotionally or physically depleted.



4. YOU'VE CHANGED (BUT HAVEN'T SHARED THAT)

We all evolve, and our minds and bodies desire new things as we age and as our relationship develops. But if you're not sharing those evolutions with each other—new desires, needs, fears, or interests—you start growing in parallel instead of together. And that space between you grows wider.

THE DISCONNECT SPIRAL

When emotional intimacy fades, potentially down to one of the above examples, we stop seeing each other clearly. We project our fears instead of expressing our feelings. And that's how the disconnect spiral begins.

This page shows just how easily that spiral can start and how you can begin to interrupt it, together.

It might be a subtle feeling: "They don't desire me like they use to." We forget to check in and instead start to make up assumptions.

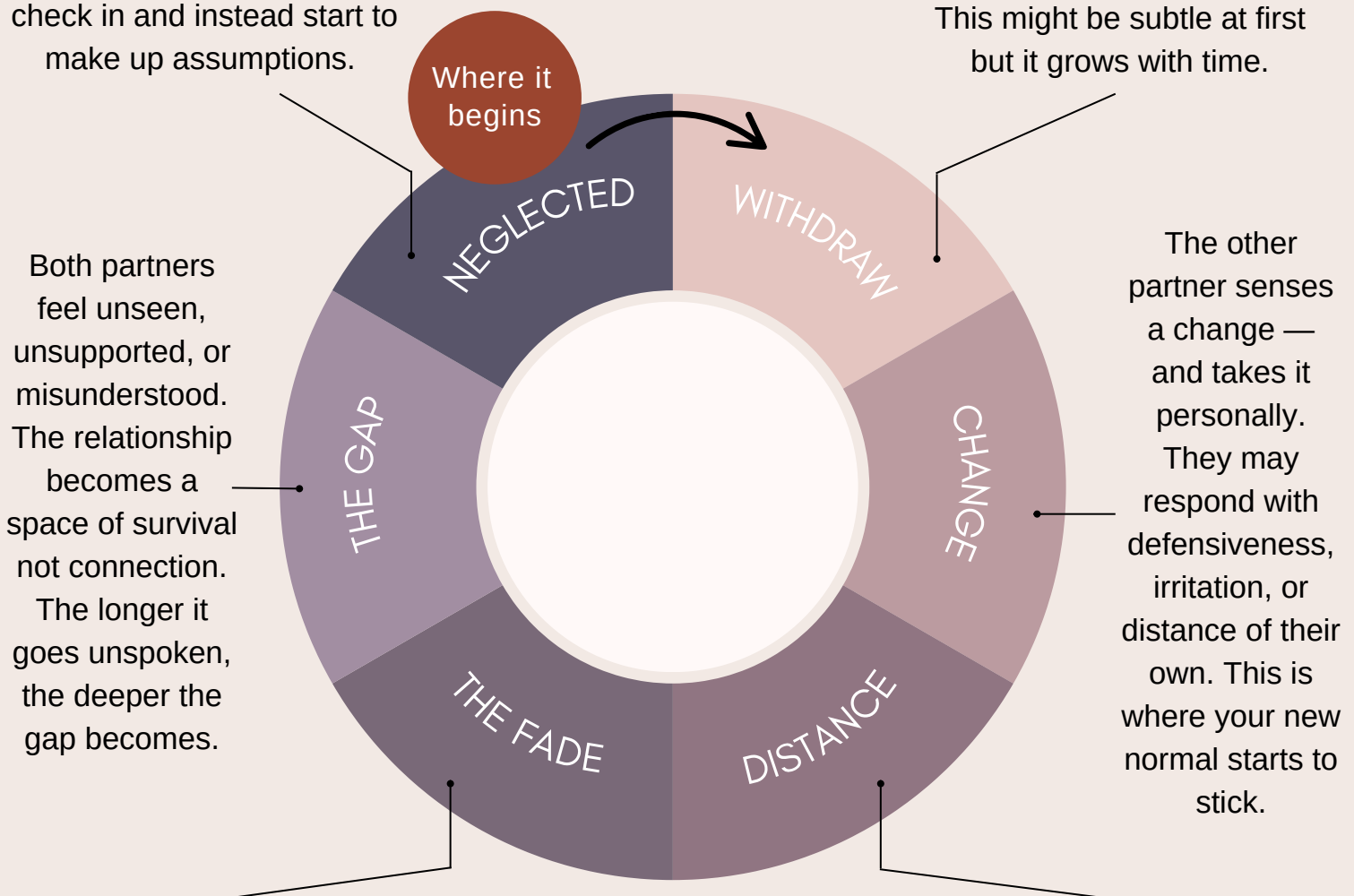
Both partners feel unseen, unsupported, or misunderstood. The relationship becomes a space of survival not connection. The longer it goes unspoken, the deeper the gap becomes.

With emotional safety low and unspoken tension high, physical intimacy drops off. Even non-sexual touch feels strained or absent. Sex may stop altogether. Slowly, the roommates' vibe kicked in.

Instead of voicing your hurt, you pull away — emotionally or physically. This might be subtle at first but it grows with time.

The other partner senses a change — and takes it personally. They may respond with defensiveness, irritation, or distance of their own. This is where your new normal starts to stick.

Talk becomes all about logistics: kids, bills, dinner, schedules. Emotional check-ins disappear. Vulnerability feels risky. Connection feels heavy or awkward as you sit in this new change, and lack of touch.





2. Before Intimacy Comes Emotional Safety

It's easy to think that what your relationship needs is more sex, more spontaneity, more fire. But none of that can thrive if emotional safety is missing. So my advice right now is to stop forcing sex for the sake of ticking a box.

Desire doesn't bloom in pressure, pushing through, performative sex, silence, or resentment. It grows through connection, understanding, and being truthful, and the most significant part is being heard!

Emotional safety is the feeling that you can be your full, messy, tender self with your partner, without fear of judgment, rejection, or being shut down. It's knowing you can express a need or boundary without it becoming a battle.

On the next page, you'll find three daily habits to help you start rebuilding that emotional safety together, small steps that make a big difference.

Let's break the disconnect spiral and start coming back to each other slowly and intentionally.



3 Daily Habits to Rebuild Emotional Safety

1

Notice the Little Things

We often wait to celebrate the big milestones, but it's the small daily gestures that keep love alive.

Make it a habit to appreciate the everyday acts of care:

- "Thanks for making the coffee this morning."
- "I noticed you did this for our family today, thank you."
- "I love how you always make me laugh when I'm tense."

🧠 **Why it matters:** Regular appreciation boosts oxytocin (the connection hormone) and reminds both of you that your efforts are seen.

2

Do a 2-Minute Check-In

Instead of jumping into chores or screens, take 2 minutes to check in with each other emotionally. You can rotate questions like:

- "One thing I miss us doing is..."
- "Tell me one high and one low from your day."
- "Is there anything you need from me tonight or tomorrow?"

Try doing this over dinner, during your bedtime routine, or on a walk.

🧠 **Why it matters:** Emotional check-ins keep you in touch with each other's inner world — which is key to feeling close and safe.

3

Use the Percentage Rule

Each morning or evening, ask:
"What percentage are you at today?" (Emotionally, mentally, energetically — whatever comes up.)

If one of you says, "I'm at 30%," the other might respond with, "Okay, I've got 70% today."
It's not about keeping score — it's about sharing the load with love.

🧠 **Why it matters:** This practice builds empathy and teamwork. It removes the pressure to perform and invites more compassion, especially on hard days.

Task one

Check-In

01

Did anything about these conversation feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar? Why do you think that was?

02

What new awareness or insight came up for you while doing this task? Did you learn anything new about each other?

03

How are you feeling now — about yourself, your partner, and your connection?

A romantic scene in a bedroom with warm, orange-toned lighting. A woman in a red dress and a man in a white shirt and suspenders are embracing. The man is looking down at the woman. In the background, there is a bed with a floral patterned headboard and white pillows.

3. Reintroduce Touch & Physical Connection

Touch is more than foreplay. It's connection, comfort, and communication. When physical intimacy fades, it can feel awkward or even scary to bring it back. But you don't have to jump straight into sex to rebuild closeness.

In fact, the most powerful place to start is with non-sexual, affectionate touch — the kind that tells your nervous system, “I'm safe. I'm loved. I'm seen.”

Why Touch Matters (Even the Non-Sexual Kind)

Research shows that affective touch, gentle, intentional, caring physical contact, helps regulate stress, strengthen emotional bonds, and release oxytocin (aka the “love hormone”).

It's not about turning each touch into something sexual. It's about laying a foundation of physical connection that makes everything else feel easier and more natural.

Once you feel you can communicate with each other by doing the habits above, you can safely move onto the intimacy ladder.



THE INTIMACY LADDER

The Intimacy Ladder is designed to help you rebuild touch and intimacy step by step, from small daily gestures to playful sensuality to deeper erotic connection. Move at your own pace, skip nothing, and return to what feels good. There's no rush — just reconnection.

1

FOUNDATION: LOW-BARRIER DAILY TOUCH

These are gentle, consistent ways to reconnect through non-sexual physical contact. Think of them as the relationship version of stretching, small but essential to keep things flowing.

Try:

A 20-second morning or evening hug

Holding hands during a walk

A hand on their knee at dinner

Resting your head on their shoulder or lap during a movie on the sofa

2

BRIDGES: FROM AFFECTION TO INTIMACY

Now that the body feels safer, introduce more intentional and sensual touch, without rushing toward sex. These are playful, exploratory, and can be deeply bonding.

Try:

Light body tracing or feather touches over clothing

Kissing slowly without it leading anywhere

Sharing a sensual (but not sexual) shower or bath

3

DEPTH: INTIMATE EXPLORATION & TURN-ON

Once emotional and physical closeness feels safer, this level invites you to re-enter the erotic space together, with more confidence, communication, and consent.

Try:

Scheduling a "pleasure date" where you focus on giving, not goals

Using a blindfold to explore different sensations or touches

Taking turns guiding each other's hands to what feels good

Task two

Check-In

01

Which stage of the ladder felt the most comfortable for you, and which felt the most challenging? Why?

02

Did you notice any new awareness about how you give and receive touch, or what you need to feel safe with it?

03

After moving through these stages, how do you feel about your physical and emotional connection right now? Are both stuck at stage? why might that be?



4. Needs, Wants & Desires

Rediscovered. Reclaimed. Reimagined.

As the relationship ages... so do we.

Our desires shift. Our bodies change. Our emotional needs evolve. But often, couples never pause to ask:

“What do I actually need from this relationship now, and what do I crave?”

Many of us carry old desires out of habit, or silence new ones out of fear. But here's the truth: Your relationship needs to grow with you, not stay stuck in who you were five, ten, or even one year ago.

Think of it this way: imagine eating the same meal every day, forever. Even your favourite dish would eventually feel dull.

Connection is the same; it needs flavour, texture, and spice.

This step involves co-creating a menu of your evolving needs, wants, and desires, encompassing emotional, physical, and sexual aspects. It's not about fixing anything. It's about discovering what's alive for you now, and giving each other the language to name it.



How to Do This Together

Set aside time where you won't be interrupted. Bring a notebook or use the space in this workbook. Sit side by side, not across from each other — you're on the same team.

Each of you take turns answering and documenting:

Needs:

"I need more... (alone time, words of affirmation, teamwork around the house...)"

"When I'm overwhelmed, I need you to..."

Wants:

"I'd love if we could bring back..."

"I want us to try..."

"I wish we made more time for..."

Desires:

"Something I've been fantasising about is..."

"I want to feel more... (desired, adventurous, confident...) in the bedroom."

Connection:

"I feel most connected to you when..."

"I miss the way we used to..."

"Our best moments lately have been when..."

This isn't about pressure or performance, it's about building a relationship that reflects who you are now, not just who you used to be.

You're allowed to evolve. Your relationship is too.

Task three

Check-In

01

Did any of your answers feel vulnerable, uncomfortable, or surprising to share? Do you both feel heard? If not, why?

02

What new awareness do you have now about both your own needs, wants, desires and your partners? Do both need more support?

03

After hearing your partner's answers, how do you feel about them, your relationship, and the way you communicate moving forward?



5. Keeping the Flame Lit (Without Burning Out)

You've done the work, explored your disconnection, rebuilt emotional safety, reintroduced touch, and shared your evolving desires.

So, how do you keep that momentum going without it becoming another chore on your relationship to-do list?

The truth is, passion isn't something you either have or don't; it's something you nurture and work on together.

It doesn't mean scheduling sex every Thursday or constantly performing some version of #couplegoals.

It means choosing each other on purpose, over and over again, especially when life tries to pull you apart.

This step is about weaving micro-moments of intimacy into your everyday life, so the flame stays warm, without the pressure to keep it roaring.



Try This: Spark Rituals

These are small but powerful ways to keep emotional and sensual connection alive — daily, weekly, and monthly.

DAILY

Share one thing you're grateful for about each other (text it if you're apart).

Touch on purpose, a kiss goodbye, a hug that lasts longer than 3 seconds, a gentle hand on the back.

Do one thing that makes your partner's day easier, no strings attached.

WEEKLY

Have a no-screens, no-chores connection window (10–20 minutes just to talk or cuddle).

Plan one small act of novelty, it could be as simple as trying a new recipe or going for a walk somewhere different.

Share a “desire check-in” something you've been thinking about, wanting, or curious to try.

MONTHLY

Schedule a “relationship reset” check-in with how you're feeling, what you need more of, and how connected you feel.

Have a no-pressure pleasure date, where the goal is to connect, not perform.

Create something together, a memory, a playlist, a shared vision for what you're building.

Remember, these are just prompts. Feel free to create your own as every couple is different.

Task four

Check-In

01

Which of these rituals felt the easiest or most natural to do, and which felt the most challenging or uncomfortable? Did you miss any? Why?

02

How much did this feel like a joint effort, and what difference did that make to the experience?

03

How do you feel about making one (or more) of these rituals a regular part of your relationship moving forward?



6. Mini-challenge the “7-day reboot”

A week of small actions that create big shifts.

You’ve read the guide. You’ve done the deep thinking. Now it’s time to put it into practice, gently, consistently, and without pressure.

These next 7 days are designed to help you reconnect emotionally, physically, and playfully... one small step at a time. There’s no “right way” to do this. Skip a day? Start again. The point isn’t perfection — it’s intention.

And remember: this only works if you’re both willing to show up. If one of you starts to pull back, gets distracted, or doesn’t feel fully committed, pause. Don’t jump to blame.

Instead, check in and ask:

“Is something in the way?”

“Do you feel ready?”

“What’s coming up for you?”

Come at it from a place of curiosity, not criticism. This is a challenge to reconnect, not to control, pressure, or perform. Some days will feel easier than others, and that’s okay.

Ready? Let’s begin.



7-day reboot



Monday

Ask your partner: “What’s one thing you’ve been needing more of lately — emotionally, practically, or physically?” Listen. No fixing. Just hear them.

Tuesday

Offer a form of touch that’s purely about connection, a massage, a cuddle, a slow kiss, or hand-holding. Don’t let it lead anywhere. Let it just be.

Wednesday

Share something you’ve thought or felt recently but didn’t say. It could be vulnerable (“I’ve missed you lately”), grateful (“I notice how much you do”), or playful (“I had a sexy thought about you...”)

Thursday

Get brave, get curious, and share one thing you’ve fantasised about, even if it’s small, silly, or totally out of character. Not ready to go full throttle? Start with:

“I’ve always been curious about...”

Friday

Create something together, like a dream weekend plan, a vision board for what kind of intimacy you want to build or even your 5-year plan. Grab some snacks & have fun! This is the time to be together and ask questions.

Saturday

Spend 5–10 minutes just being close, no words, no scrolling, no TV. Try:
Lying chest-to-chest or stroking hair, skin, or running fingers along each other’s hands

Sunday

Individually write down five words that describe the kind of relationship you want to build moving forward. Then share them with each other. Are they the same? Different? Surprising?

You Made It to the End... But This is Just the Beginning

You've shown up. For yourself. For each other. For your relationship.

Working through this guide isn't about fixing something broken; it's about reconnecting with what's always been there. A desire to feel seen, wanted, held, turned on, supported... and deeply connected.

You've explored the roots of disconnection.

You've rebuilt emotional safety.

You've touched with intention.

You've shared what you need, what you crave, and what you long for.

You've created rituals that feel like yours.

This is the kind of work that sustains a relationship, not grand gestures or perfectly planned date nights, but everyday intimacy, honest conversation, and a willingness to keep choosing each other again and again.

And remember: you don't need to do this perfectly.

You just need to stay present, curious, and committed to creating something real.

When it feels hard — check in.

When you feel distance — turn toward.

When you lose your way — come back here.

This is your reminder that love is not just a feeling, it's a practice.

April Maria

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

You've already taken a huge step, showing up for your relationship, doing the work, and making space for reconnection. But sometimes, the real breakthroughs happen when you have someone walking alongside you, helping you see what's possible and guiding you through the hard-to-talk-about parts with compassion and clarity.

If you're ready to go deeper, to explore your desires, strengthen your intimacy, or navigate the challenges that get in the way of feeling close, confident, and connected, my 1:1 coaching sessions are here for you.

Whether you're on this journey alone or with a partner, we'll create a safe, shame-free space where you can be honest, curious, and fully yourself. Together, we'll untangle old patterns, rebuild confidence, and move toward the version of you (and your relationship) that feels alive, loved, and deeply connected.

Head to my website to book a free discovery call.

