

CALM YOURSELF

Flooding is a physiological, fight-or-flight response that happens when we feel threatened or attacked in some way - whether that threat is real or only perceived. Answer the following questions and share with your spouse for a better understanding of how to calm yourselves and communicate well when you get flooded.

What physiological reactions let you know that you're flooded?
(Shaking, heart racing, flushed face, dry mouth, stomachache, heartache, etc.)

Research shows that it takes at least 20 minutes for our bodies to return to their resting, steady states after being physiologically aroused and reactive. How much time, between 20 - 60 minutes, do you think you need to calm down? (Experiment with the length of time until you find what's right for both of you.)

How will you communicate that you need to calm down in a way that lets your spouse know that you plan to return and resume the conversation after the allotted amount of time?

What activities or coping strategies could you engage in when you get flooded?
(Praying, journaling, reading, jogging, walking, cleaning, organizing, watching TV, etc.)

If you were to communicate to your spouse that you're flooded and need to calm yourself, would any of the items you listed above still be triggers for your spouse? (Ask! Then choose a different calming strategy, if needed.)

What defense mechanisms do I engage in when I'm triggered and flooded?

- **denial:** refusing to believe what my partner is saying about me
- **avoidance:** refusing to believe there's an issue at all
- **intellectualization/spiritualization:** using faith or reason to avoid confrontation
- **rationalization:** making excuses for my behavior, intentions, or motives
- **reaction formation:** doing the opposite of what I actually feel
- **personalization:** internalizing negativity
- **passive-aggression:** projecting anger or bitterness indirectly onto my partner

Decide with your spouse how you'll each take a break. What signal, sign, or code word will you use?

Talk specifically about how you'll come back together to finish your conversation or to talk about what happened.



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Brave Marriage exists to educate, encourage, and equip couples to grow as individuals, do marriage with intention, and live mutually empowered, purposeful lives.

If these questions have been helpful to you, would you consider sharing the podcast and worksheets with your friends and family? I consider this part of my business a ministry to couples, and would love your help in sharing this teaching with others.

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