2. TAMING THE HAILSTORM AND COAXING OUT THE TURTLE

Adapted from “[Making Marriage Simple](http://makingmarriagesimple.com/)” by Harville Hendrix & Helen laKelly Hunt

**Truth #2: Incompatibility Is Grounds for Committing to a Relationship**

Incompatibility, and the resulting tension of opposites, is vital to the work of healing and growth. This occurs in stage 2 of relationships – the Power Struggle stage. And one of the ways you and your partner are opposite is in how you respond to conflict. The two main categories are minimising or maximising. Turtles are Minimisers, when they’re anxious, they pull their reactions deep inside, like a turtle retreating into its shell. Hailstorms are Maximisers, when they’re anxious they tend to express themselves loudly to whoever is in hearing range. If you’re on the receiving end, it can feel as if you’re being pelted with golf-ball sized hail. Take a minute to think which way you mostly react. If the answers still elude you, think about how you react when you’re really frustrated— and you can always ask your partner!

Knowing which you are is all well and good, but what can you **do** about it? Following are ideas that couples have found very useful. These ideas are great when you’re in the midst of a struggle. But you can also use them before any conflict arises to avoid having the Hailstorm hail or the Turtle hide.

Coaxing That Turtle Out

You’re a Hailstorm and your Turtle is firmly stuck in their shell. Here are some ideas for luring them out:

1. Ask them what they need right now. Don’t get upset if they aren’t sure. Just ask the question, and then focus on being someone your partner feels safe confiding in. Become more curious rather than furious about why your Turtle has a hard shell (and a soft belly).

2. Don’t do anything. This is the simplest (and generally most effective) option. But it’s also often the hardest for a Hailstorm. The thing is, if you give your Turtle a bit of space, they will peek out of their shell before you know it— and you won’t feel like you’re in it alone anymore.

3. Write a short, kind note of sincere praise, and leave it somewhere for them to find (e.g. on their desk, night-stand, in their briefcase, taped to the bathroom mirror). This reminds the Turtle that they are appreciated.

Calming the Hailstorm Down

You’re a Turtle, and your Hailstorm is at full fury, pounding you with their golf-ball-sized hail. Here are some ideas to soothe the storm cloud away:

1. Leave them a token of appreciation— a flower, a kind note, or a favorite snack. This little gesture lets them know you care about them, and that you’re not withdrawing.

2. Ask: “What’s going on?” Listen, and repeat back what your Hailstorm says.

3. If you really want to calm the Hailstorm, you can ask: “Is there something I can do for you?” More than anything, this will let the Hailstorm know that you’ve got their back. And having a partner who has their back means everything to the Hailstorm.

The thing is, you’ve got to follow up and actually DO whatever it is that they’ve said you could do for them. Otherwise you can expect the hail you’re receiving to get even bigger!

**Remember: Incompatibility is not only grounds for marriage. It’s the opportunity to create a great marriage!**