8. TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

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

**Truth #8: Your Brain Has a Mind of Its Own**

Those who study the brain have shown that it’s possible to train your neural (nerve) pathways to create newer, healthier connections. For the purposes of this exercise, the brain has been broken down into two sections: the lower, **reactive** part of the brain we’ll call the Crocodile. And the higher, **responsive** part of the brain that can create win-wins, we’ll call the Owl.

This exercise helps you strengthen the higher part of your brain, so that it’s easier to align yourself with the Owl and enables you to put the Crocodile to rest.

1. You’ll need 10-15 minutes for this. Find a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed. Sit in a comfortable chair, close your eyes and for 5 minutes (use a timer) focus on your breathing and count your breaths up to 10. When you reach 10, start again. Also start again if you lose count. Do this until the time is up.
2. Now bring up something that you love or like about your partner. Hold this firmly in your mind for 5 breaths. Then let it go and bring to mind something about your partner that disturbs you. Hold this firmly in your mind for 2 breaths. Repeat this sequence for 5 minutes.
3. Now imagine your partner. Think about them:
4. On the day you decided to commit to each other
5. At a time they were grieving or scared
6. At a time when you felt particularly proud of them.

Holding these images in mind, say out loud “My partner is a human being just like me. They try hard, make mistakes, feel pain and want to be loved.” From this place, send your partner loving thoughts.

Practice this on a **daily basis**, adding it to the days that you share Appreciations with each other. The goal is to practice to the point where you are able to get to this meditative place easily. This will make it easy to stay connected to the Owl as you listen to your partner’s frustrations.

**Remember: You have the power to rewire your brain. Building a Partnership Relationship actually changes your brain chemistry, creating neural pathways to support the work you’re doing.**