



ACT WITH LOVE · THE MODEL

THE DRAIN AND THE LOVE

ACT names what pulls a relationship apart and what rebuilds it, two acronyms you can catch yourself in.

DRAIN, WHAT PULLS YOU APART

WHEN YOU'RE STUCK

- **Disconnection:** going cold or distant, tuning out, getting bored or irritable, no longer fully present with your partner.
- **Reactivity:** acting on impulse without a pause, yelling, snapping, criticizing, blaming, storming off, saying things you can't take back.
- **Avoidance:** dodging the painful feelings tied to the relationship, withdrawing, numbing out, or refusing to talk about the issue.
- **Inside your mind:** getting lost in thought, replaying old hurts, stewing over what's wrong with your partner, caught in judgment and blame.
- **Neglecting values:** losing touch with the qualities you care about, kindness, patience, warmth, and acting nothing like the partner you want to be.

LOVE, WHAT REBUILDS IT

THE WAY BACK

- **Letting go** (defusion): unhooking from the harsh stories and judgments your mind hands you, so they stop steering you.
- **Opening up** (acceptance): making room for the hard feelings instead of fighting them or acting them out.
- **Valuing:** getting clear on the partner you want to be, and letting that guide what you do.
- **Engaging:** coming back to the present and giving your partner your full attention.



CATCH YOUR DRAIN

Pick a recent hard moment and notice which parts of DRAIN showed up for you (this is about your own side, not building a case against your partner).

How I DISCONNECT

e.g. go quiet, tune out, get cold, stop listening

How I get REACTIVE

e.g. snap, criticize, storm off, keep score

How I AVOID the hard feelings

e.g. withdraw, numb out, refuse to talk about it

How I get stuck INSIDE MY MIND

e.g. replay old hurts, stew over their flaws, judge

The value I NEGLECT when I do these

e.g. patience, kindness, warmth, honesty

One LOVE move I'll make next time (let go / open up / value / engage)

DRAIN is not a verdict on your relationship. It names the pull that shows up in every couple under stress. Catching your own side of it, and choosing a LOVE move instead, is how you stay the partner you want to be when things get hard. If you and your partner keep landing in the same DRAIN and can't find the way back, that's what couples therapy is for. Adapted from Russ Harris's *ACT with Love* (the DRAIN and LOVE model, ch. 2). My Mental Climb is not affiliated with or endorsed by Russ Harris or the developers of ACT.

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