> CL/RF _ Couple Life Reflection Framework

A practical tool for diagnostics, vision, and change in relationships

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Vilnius 2025

Preface

This began with a habit: making sense of complexity. For years I designed and led systems — code, teams, organizations — by finding structure inside the noise. Eventually I noticed the same turbulence in the most important system I'm part of: a relationship. If we can map distributed systems, why not the living system between two people?

Instead of choosing between advice columns and raw emotion, I started building a bridge: a way to hold **logic and feeling** at the same time. That is how **> CL/RF _ Couple Life Reflection Framework** appeared — a tool that helps two people notice their **conditions, needs, and functions**, and turn them into shared language, shared choices, and shared momentum.

You don't have to be an engineer to use this. Whether you write code, teach, design, lead, parent, or simply care deeply about doing life together with intention — the same fundamentals apply. We all meet the familiar frictions: uncertainty, overload, misalignment, conflict. We also share the same aspirations: calm, clarity, curiosity, belonging, respect, growth.

This framework is practical. It turns parallel monologues into a conversation you can navigate. It gives you questions that create insight, not pressure. It helps you move **from overwhelm to calm**, **from blame to curiosity**, **from assumptions to clarity**, and **from "mine vs. yours" to "ours"**. You can use it alone for self-reflection, together for joint decisions, or in small steps when time is scarce.

What you will find ahead:

- A simple map of conditions → needs → functions, so you can see where you are and where you want to go.
- Short practices that fit real days, not ideal ones.
- Prompts that invite honesty without judgment and progress without haste.
- Ways to appreciate what already works, and to change what doesn't — kindly, clearly, and together.

If you're here, something in you already believes that a better rhythm is possible. Take a breath. Bring your attention. Begin with one small page, one small question, one small agreement. Let that be enough for today.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Why a framework for relationships is needed (Problem Space)

Relationships often evolve spontaneously: partners are guided by emotions, habits, and cultural expectations. This works up to a certain point, but eventually leads to misunderstanding, conflicts, and a feeling of stagnation.

Couples often circle around surface topics (money, chores, time) instead of the needs underneath. Conversations stay unstructured, so patterns repeat, misunderstandings pile up, or both partners go quiet. There's a gap between casual talk (too little structure) and therapy (too heavy or expensive). CLRF fills this gap with a light structure that supports real conversations and helps partners see, name, and align their needs.

A framework is needed to bring structure and clarity. It helps to understand what conditions shape our lives, what needs stand behind our emotions and requests, and what functions of the couple and each of us can satisfy those needs. Beyond structure, it offers calm when emotions rise, curiosity when assumptions close us off, and belonging when distance appears.

2. The problem with fantasy visions

Without diagnostics, partners often build visions of the future in the form of fantasies. These pictures may be too personal and far from reality. Comparing such fantasies can cause disappointment or a sense of incompatibility, even though there is common potential underneath.

The framework helps to ground visions: to build them on an understanding of real conditions and needs. It shifts hope from fragile imagination to realistic inspiration, and keeps respect present when dreams differ.

3. Basic principle: Conditions → Needs → Functions

The system is based on a three-level model:

- Conditions: the facts and environment in which we live.
- Needs: internal requests formed against the background of conditions.
- Functions: actions and mechanisms through which we satisfy needs.

This logic is universal and helps distinguish background, request, and way of acting. It allows couples to approach conversations with clarity instead of defensiveness, and with patience instead of haste.

4. Balance of "I" and "We"

Relationships consist of two levels:

- Personal functions and needs ("I") that help each person stay whole and develop.
- Joint functions ("We") that provide support, closeness, and cooperation.

Balance is achieved when the personal and the joint do not contradict each other but reinforce one another. This balance is also emotional: "I" needs recognition, courage, and growth; "We" needs trust, empathy, and shared purpose. Together they create belonging and resilience.

5. How to use this framework

The framework does not dictate ready-made solutions but gives a map. Based on this map, the couple goes through stages:

1. Diagnosing current conditions, needs, and functions.
2. Building visions of the future (individual and joint).
3. Defining necessary changes.
4. Prioritizing steps.
5. Developing principles and strategies for interaction.

Each stage invites reflection without judgment, dialogue without blame, and progress without pressure. Small steps, taken with patience, become lasting changes.

6. CLRF Vision and Mission

Vision

Every couple can gain clarity and shared understanding about their needs without therapy, jargon, or years of trial and error. They can move from overwhelm to calm, from doubt to trust, and from isolation to belonging.

Mission

CLRF provides a simple, practical framework (book, exercises, app) that helps see conditions, needs, and functions, structure conversations, and keep the focus on real experiences. It equips couples to nurture respect, curiosity, and playfulness while facing life's challenges.

7. CLRF Values and Beliefs

Values

- Clarity over confusion
- Simplicity over complexity
- Real connection over digital noise
- Mutual respect over one-sided wins
- Playfulness over heaviness
- Belonging over indifference
- Patience over haste

Beliefs

- All couples face alignment gaps — it's part of being human.
- Structure helps reduce friction and unlock deeper connection.
- Small, regular conversations matter more than rare big talks.
- Language shapes outcomes: naming lowers defensiveness.
- Emotions are signals, not threats — when we listen with curiosity, they guide us to needs.
- Tools are helpers, not replacements.

Chapter 2. Conditions

Conditions are the background and environment in which the couple lives. They create the frame that can support the relationship or, on the contrary, complicate it. Conditions cannot always be changed immediately, but they must be acknowledged to understand what needs arise and which functions should be activated. Awareness itself already brings calm, reduces defensiveness, and invites curiosity about what can be adjusted.

Categories of conditions

1. Material – housing, finances, household.
2. Time – work schedules, free time, rhythm of life.
3. Social – family, friends, community, social roles.
4. Cultural and value conditions – faith, worldview, values, cultural environment.
5. Non-material personal – health, emotional background, personal space.

1. Material conditions

These include housing, income level, financial stability, distribution of household duties, and the presence of a comfortable daily routine. Material conditions create basic stability. For example, limited living space can generate tension, and financial instability can increase anxiety. When addressed with respect and patience, they can also strengthen trust and shared responsibility.

2. Time conditions

Time is a key resource in relationships. Work schedules, the overlap or mismatch of free time, and the overall rhythm of life (for example, "lark" and "owl") directly influence the quality of shared leisure and the possibility of emotional closeness. Negotiating time with clarity and empathy helps transform frustration into belonging.

3. Social conditions

Family, children, relatives, and their involvement in the couple's life can be both a source of support and a factor of pressure. Friends and community give a sense of belonging but sometimes create expectations. Social roles (for example, professional status) also impose obligations. Naming these dynamics openly reduces hidden resentment and allows gratitude for support to be expressed.

4. Cultural and value conditions

This includes faith, philosophical or spiritual beliefs, and a value system — honesty, respect, freedom. Cultural environment, traditions, and language form the context in which the couple lives. Different values can be a source of conflicts, while shared values are a strong unifying factor. Curiosity toward differences and appreciation for common ground turn potential conflict into growth.

5. Non-material personal conditions

This includes health (physical and mental), emotional state, and personal space. If one partner has chronic stress or no time for themselves, it directly affects the couple. Caring for such conditions helps to reduce tension and maintain balance. Respecting boundaries and offering encouragement supports resilience and mutual trust.

Conclusion

Conditions are not "right" or "wrong." They are the reality that is important to acknowledge. Awareness of conditions determines which needs will be relevant and which functions will have to be activated. Facing them with calm, patience, and honesty builds the ground for lasting connection.

Chapter 3. Needs

Needs are internal requests formed in relation to conditions. They define what matters to us at a given moment and set the direction for joint and personal actions. Distinguishing conditions from needs helps avoid confusion: a condition is a fact; a need is a desire or request. Naming needs with honesty and curiosity lowers defensiveness and builds trust.

Categories of needs

1. Physiological / basic – health, safety, sexual closeness.
2. Emotional / psychological – love, recognition, support, emotional safety.
3. Development / growth – personal development, self-realization, novelty and impressions.
4. Shared / couple – common goals, traditions, shared time, a sense of "we".
5. Social / external – recognition as a couple, social support, harmony with the environment.

1. Physiological / basic

These needs relate to survival and basic stability: health, sleep, nutrition, financial and physical safety, sexual closeness. If unmet, the couple inevitably faces tension. Attending to them with respect and patience reduces anxiety and builds a foundation for calm.

2. Emotional / psychological

These are needs for love, attention, recognition, and respect. They relate to feeling valued and safe in the relationship. When met, partners feel trust and emotional closeness. Gratitude and validation deepen this connection, while neglect can lead to doubt or resentment.

3. Development / growth

Every person strives for growth: learning, new skills, self-realization. For a couple, this is also the need for novelty and experiences. When development is blocked, a sense of stagnation and dissatisfaction arises. Supporting each other's growth invites inspiration, courage, and a sense of shared progress.

4. Shared / couple

These are needs that shape the identity of the couple: common goals and projects, traditions and rituals, shared time. They create the feeling of "we" that is important for long-term resilience. Belonging grows when partners commit to shared rhythms, celebrate together, and respect each other's contribution.

5. Social / external

These needs relate to the outside world: recognition and support from family and friends, as well as harmony with the surrounding environment. The social environment can strengthen the couple or, on the contrary, create tension. Expressing appreciation for support and setting clear boundaries with respect protects both closeness and independence.

Difference between conditions and needs

It is important to distinguish conditions and needs:

- Condition: a fact, a given (e.g., "we have a small apartment").
- Need: a desire, a request (e.g., "I need more space").

This distinction helps build visions and changes more realistically and constructively. It also reduces frustration, since couples can move from blame ("we are stuck here") to curiosity ("what do we really need?").

Conclusion

Needs form the basis for a vision of the future and inform the choice of functions. Recognizing them helps us understand ourselves and each other better and avoid misunderstandings when partners speak about conditions but mean needs. Meeting needs with empathy, clarity, and encouragement turns vulnerability into connection and creates hope for shared growth.

Chapter 4. Functions

Functions are ways of acting through which the couple and each partner satisfy their needs under given conditions. Functions are divided into shared (that serve the couple) and personal (that serve each individual). Their balance determines the stability of the relationship. When functions are seen not just as tasks but as living expressions of care, respect, and curiosity, they bring energy rather than burden.

Categories of functions

1. Shared functions – ensure interaction and shared life.
2. Personal functions – help each person remain whole and develop.

1. Shared functions

They include:

- Communication (discussing emotions, decision-making, conflict resolution).
  Done with clarity and patience, communication transforms tension into understanding.
- Support (emotional, practical, financial).
  Offering support with empathy and gratitude strengthens trust and belonging.
- Cooperation (division of duties, agreements, and flexibility).
  Cooperation based on respect reduces resentment and creates fairness.
- Intimacy (physical, emotional, intellectual).
  Intimacy thrives where curiosity, safety, and playfulness are present.
- Joint development (projects, learning, rituals, new experiences).
  Shared growth invites inspiration and keeps the relationship resilient.

These functions form the foundation of the "we," nurturing connection and resilience over time.

2. Personal functions

They include:

- Self-care (health, stress management, rest).
  Practicing self-care creates calm and prevents overload.
- Emotional work (self-reflection, self-regulation, self-worth).
  This builds clarity and courage, reducing defensiveness.
- Hobbies and interests (creativity, sports, pursuits).
  Joy in personal interests adds playfulness and energy to the couple's rhythm.
- Social self-realization (work, friends, contribution to society).
  Social expression reinforces identity and belonging beyond the couple.
- Personal development (learning, spiritual practices, new experiences).
  Personal growth sparks curiosity and hope for the future.

These functions help a person stay fulfilled and avoid overloading the relationship. Encouragement from a partner turns individual pursuits into shared pride.

Balance of personal and shared functions

Strong personal functions ease the shared ones: for example, if a person can cope with stress, the partner does not become the sole source of support. Weak personal functions, on the contrary, overload the relationship: when there are no hobbies or friends, the partner has to compensate for everything.

Balance is achieved when personal and shared do not contradict each other but reinforce one another. Balance is also emotional: trust and patience in "we" grow when "I" is supported with respect and recognition.

Conclusion

Functions are not obligations or rules. They are mechanisms activated to satisfy needs. They can be implemented through different practices, and this is where the framework's flexibility comes from. Approached with calm, curiosity, and playfulness, functions become a source of strength rather than a source of pressure.

Chapter 5. Links

Conditions, needs, and functions do not exist separately. They are connected in the sequence: Condition → Need → Function. This logic helps us understand how reality shapes requests and how requests determine actions. When links are named clearly, they reduce frustration, build curiosity, and turn tension into practical steps.

1. Condition → Need

Examples:

- Condition: little time together → Need: closeness, togetherness.
  Awareness shifts focus from blame ("we never meet") to belonging ("I need to feel close to you").
- Condition: financial instability → Need: safety, confidence.
  Naming the need reduces anxiety and creates patience for shared solutions.
- Condition: pressure from relatives → Need: autonomy, boundaries.
  Respectful recognition of this need avoids resentment and restores balance.
- Condition: chronic stress → Need: emotional safety.
  Honest acknowledgment invites empathy instead of defensiveness.

2. Need → Function

Examples:

- Need: recognition → Function: communication (gratitude, compliments).
  Gratitude and validation nurture trust and closeness.
- Need: shared time → Function: cooperation (planning leisure time).
  Respectful planning creates belonging and fairness.
- Need: emotional safety → Function: support (empathy, attention).
  Support offered with patience and care reduces fear.
- Need: development → Function: joint development (new projects, learning).
  Shared growth inspires hope and keeps the relationship alive.

3. Personal functions and their impact on shared ones

Strong personal functions reduce the load on shared functions. For example, if a person can manage stress, there are fewer conflicts. If they have hobbies and social connections, their partner does not become the sole source of joy and recognition. This creates space for curiosity and playfulness in the shared "we".

Weak personal functions increase the load on shared functions: a lack of autonomy, social connections, or self-regulation can create excessive expectations and tension. Resentment often arises here, but awareness and encouragement can restore balance.

4. Universal formula

Condition (background) → Need (request) → Function (mode of action)

Example:

- Condition: lots of work, little time.
- Need: to be closer and communicate.
- Shared function: a weekly gadget-free evening.
- Personal function: managing fatigue to stay engaged.

This sequence turns stress into clarity, and helps couples move from "we can't" to "let's try".

Conclusion

Links turn abstract conversations ("we need more closeness") into concrete steps ("we set aside an evening, we create a ritual"). This is the key to practical use of the framework. When couples practice linking with honesty, patience, and respect, they move from confusion to clarity and from distance to belonging.

Chapter 6. Vision

A vision is a picture of the future that a person or couple strives for. It helps set the direction and build a strategy for change. It is important to distinguish fantasies from a vision: a vision must take into account real conditions and needs to be achievable and useful. A clear vision creates hope, belonging, and courage to act, while keeping curiosity alive for what the future may bring.

1. Individual visions

Each partner formulates their own picture of the future. It is important to write in the first person: "I want…", "I see myself…". An individual vision reflects personal needs, dreams, and goals. Even if they do not fully coincide, acknowledging these visions is important for understanding each other's inner world. Recognition here nurtures respect and validation, reducing defensiveness.

2. Partner's vision as seen by the other

A helpful practice is to describe how you imagine your partner's vision. For example: "I think it is important for you…". This helps reveal misunderstandings and assess how well you know one another. When done with patience and empathy, this practice deepens trust and creates gratitude for being seen.

3. Joint vision

After both partners share their visions, a joint picture of the future is created. It includes a common core (what matches) and room for differences (what remains personal). A joint vision should be both realistic and inspiring. Belonging grows when common purpose is named, and respect is strengthened when differences are honored.

4. Recognition of personal goals and fantasies

Not all personal dreams and fantasies can be realized. However, recognizing them matters: they show values and desires. The fantasy "a house by the sea" may express the value of "calm and space". Such values can be considered when creating a joint vision, even if the dream itself remains personal. Naming fantasies with curiosity turns disappointment into clarity and connection.

5. Comparison and synthesis of visions

Comparing visions helps reveal:

- Overlaps (common core, basis for the future).
- Differences (where to seek compromise or preserve what is personal).

The synthesized vision of the couple includes the common core and a respectful acknowledgment of differences. This forms a sense of union without losing individuality. Courage to embrace differences strengthens resilience and trust in the shared path.

Conclusion

A vision is a guideline, not a rigid plan. It sets direction and inspires, yet allows changes as conditions and needs evolve. Practiced with honesty, respect, and playfulness, visioning becomes not only strategic but also emotionally connecting — turning dreams into shared hope.

Chapter 7. Changes

Changes are the bridge between the current situation and the vision of the future. They allow abstract wishes to be turned into concrete steps. Changes vary in scale – from daily habits to major decisions. Approached with patience and respect, changes reduce fear and create hope.

1. Categories of change

- Radical – large, long-term steps (moving, changing jobs, decisions about having children). These require courage, trust, and mutual encouragement.
- Compromise – agreements (division of duties, schedules, boundaries with relatives). Compromise works best when guided by fairness and respect.
- Micro-changes – small habits and rituals (gadget-free dinner, daily compliments, morning coffee together). Micro-changes create belonging and gratitude in daily rhythm.

2. Gap analysis

Gap analysis helps compare the current state with the desired future:

- Where we are now.
- Where we want to be.
- What changes are needed to bridge the gap.

This method helps define steps systematically. It also lowers frustration, turning doubt into clarity.

3. Examples of changes

Example 1

- Current state: little time together.
- Desired future: more emotional closeness.
- Change: introduce a weekly gadget-free evening (micro-change).

This builds belonging and calm.

Example 2

- Current state: financial instability.
- Desired future: confidence and stability.
- Change: create a joint budget and savings strategy (radical).

This nurtures trust and patience.

Example 3

- Current state: conflicts about household chores.
- Desired future: fair division of household duties.
- Change: make a list of duties and redistribute them (compromise).

This restores respect and reduces resentment.

4. Shared and personal changes

It is important to distinguish:

- Shared changes (what concern the couple).
- Personal changes (what each does for themselves).

Balance means moving in both directions: developing both the "we" and the "I". Encouraging each other in personal changes creates recognition and shared pride, while shared changes strengthen unity.

Conclusion

Change is a process, not a one-time decision. It requires time, agreement, and readiness to adjust. Even small

steps can lead to big results over time. When changes are guided by clarity, curiosity, and mutual support, they transform pressure into progress and open space for growth together.

Chapter 8. Prioritization and Strategy

After defining changes, it is important to set priorities and work out a strategy for implementing them. Without this, there is a risk of overload: too many goals at once lead to burnout or giving up on change.

1. Prioritization

Methods of prioritization:

- Eisenhower Matrix:
    - Important and urgent – do immediately.
    - Important but not urgent – plan.
    - Not important but urgent – delegate or minimize.
    - Not important and not urgent – discard.
- The "Top 3" rule: choose no more than three key changes for the next 3–6 months.
- Balance: priorities should include both shared and personal changes.

2. Strategy

Strategy is a set of principles and regular actions that help you stay on course. It includes:

- Principles (e.g., "we discuss important issues once a week," "we do not make decisions during conflict").
- Rituals (e.g., weekly planning meeting, family retrospective).
- Progress check (Once a month, we review the table of changes).

3. Mini-rituals

Simple regular practices help sustain the strategy:

- Daily short check-ins ("How are you today?").
- Weekly discussion of plans and moods.
- Monthly retrospective (what works, what needs improvement).

These rituals create a steady rhythm and reduce the likelihood of accumulating conflicts.

Conclusion

Prioritization and strategy help turn intentions into actions. They provide clarity on what is important right now, what can be postponed, and how you maintain movement toward the vision together.

Chapter 9. Practices from Professional and Personal Toolkit

The **> CL/RF _ Couple Life Reflection Framework** sets the basics: conditions, needs, and functions. But changes and actions can be implemented through different practices. Many come from the professional environment and can be adapted for a couple. Additionally, tools are included that help in daily interaction.

1. VMOSA (Vision–Mission–Objectives–Strategy–Action)

This structure helps build a vision and the path toward it.

- Vision: where we want to go.
- Mission: why we do it.
- Objectives: specific goals.
- Strategy: how we will act.
- Action: what we do right now.

In relationships, VMOSA helps turn abstract wishes into an action plan.

2. RACI (Responsible–Accountable–Consulted–Informed)

RACI helps distribute roles and areas of responsibility.

- Responsible: who performs the task.
- Accountable: who is ultimately answerable and approves the result.
- Consulted: who to consult.
- Informed: whom to inform.

In a couple, this can apply to finances or household tasks to reduce conflicts over "who was supposed to do it".

3. Agile / Scrum practices

Agile provides tools for regular interaction.

- Weekly "stand-ups" (what matters now, what hinders, what we improve).
- Retrospectives (once a month: what works, what doesn't, what to try).
- Small iterations (experiments with new habits).

This helps avoid overload and move step by step.

4. Kanban and WIP limits

Kanban makes tasks visible and reduces overload.

- Board: to do → in progress → done.
- WIP limit: no more than 2–3 projects at once.

Applicable to renovations, vacations, or any family projects.

5. Wardley Maps

Wardley Maps help see values, needs and practices in dynamics: what has become habitual and what is still new.

For a couple, this is a tool for strategic decisions: relocating, changing jobs, choosing a future direction.

6. Risk management

Risk analysis allows you to prepare for crises.

- What risks we have (financial, emotional, health).
- How we mitigate them (reserve, insurance, support).
- How we respond if they occur (rules of behavior in crisis).

This reduces uncertainty and gives a sense of confidence.

7. Situational Leadership (D1–D4)

The situational leadership model shows that interaction style depends on the partner's maturity and readiness. Four states are distinguished:

- D1: enthusiasm without experience – needs support and instructions.
- D2: first disappointments – needs help and joint decisions.
- D3: partial competence – support and trust are useful.
- D4: maturity and experience – delegation and freedom are possible.

In a couple, this model helps you understand when a partner needs support and when they need space.

8. Working Agreements

Working Agreements are shared rules the couple agrees on for daily interaction. They codify what we consider important.

Examples:

- We do not make important decisions during conflict.
- We do weekly planning on Sunday evening.
- We use a respectful tone even in arguments.

Such agreements create a sense of predictability and safety.

9. Me Manual

A Me Manual is an "instruction about me" written by each partner. It helps better understand each other's specifics and reduce misunderstandings.

Example contents:

- How I usually react to stress.
- What helps me calm down faster.
- What especially irritates me.
- How best to give me feedback.

Sharing such "manuals" allows us to act consciously and avoid repeating the same mistakes.

10. Other practices for interest

There are other popular tools that can be studied and tried:

- NVC (Nonviolent Communication) – communication through feelings and needs.
- Johari Window – exploring blind spots and trust.
- GROW Model – structure for conversations about goals.
- Eisenhower Matrix – classic priority matrix.
- Moving Motivators, DiSC, Big Five, MBTI – personality and motivation models.
- Imago Dialogue – structured dialogue for difficult conversations.
- OKRs and SMART – goal-setting methods.

These practices are not included in the core of the framework but can be useful for expansion and inspiration.

Conclusion

Professional and adapted practices help translate theory into action. They do not impose rules but provide convenient tools that can be tailored to the style of a particular couple. Incorporating situational leadership, agreements, and personal manuals makes the set of practices more complete and applicable.

Chapter 10. Conclusion

The "Couple Life Reflection Framework" offers a structure that helps couples approach their relationships consciously. It is built on three levels: conditions, needs, and functions. These levels form the foundation for diagnostics, vision, and change.

1. Framework summary

- Conditions – the background and environment that affect the relationship.
- Needs – internal requests forming motivation.
- Functions – actions and mechanisms that satisfy needs.

Together they create a map that helps us understand where we are and where we want to go.

2. Practical value

The framework allows you to:

- Avoid confusion between facts and desires.
- Separate the personal and the shared while maintaining balance.
- Turn abstract conversations into concrete steps.
- Build visions grounded in reality.
- Plan changes without overload.

3. Use in life

This tool is not a substitute for emotions or intuition. It helps give them shape. You can use it regularly, or return to it when you feel the relationship needs renewal or review.

4. Final word

Relationships are a living process. The framework helps make it more conscious and flexible. It does not provide ready-made recipes, but it offers a map on which each couple can find their own path.

Practice 1. Conditions Checklist

This checklist will help you identify the main conditions in your life that influence your relationship. Mark the most important ones and add your own if necessary.

1. Material conditions

☐ Housing (quality, space, stability)

☐ Finances (income, expenses, debts, savings)

☐ Household (division of chores, convenience, appliances)

2. Time conditions

☐ Work schedules (schedule compatibility, workload)

☐ Free time (how it aligns or is divided)

☐ Life rhythm (pace, sleep/rest habits)

3. Social conditions

☐ Family (parents, children, relatives, their influence)

☐ Friends and community (support or pressure)

☐ Social roles (work, status, societal expectations)

4. Cultural and value conditions

☐ Faith / worldview (religion, philosophy, spiritual practices)

☐ Values (honesty, freedom, respect, traditions)

☐ National / cultural environment (customs, language, norms)

5. Non-material personal conditions

☐ Health (physical and mental)

☐ Emotional background (stress, mood, stability)

☐ Personal space and autonomy (time/space for oneself)

My notes and additions

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Practice 2. Needs Checklist

This checklist will help you identify personal and shared needs. Choose the most significant ones for you and add your own if needed. You can also set priorities (for example, from 1 to 5).

1. Physiological / basic

☐ Health (sleep, nutrition, physical activity)

☐ Sexual intimacy

☐ Safety (housing, financial stability)

2. Emotional / psychological

☐ Love and attachment (feeling loved and needed)

☐ Recognition and respect (feeling valued in your partner's eyes)

☐ Support and attention (empathy, care)

☐ Emotional safety (ability to be yourself without fear)

3. Development / growth

☐ Personal development (learning, skills, creativity)

☐ Self-realization (sense of meaning and achievement)

☐ Novelty and experiences (travel, hobbies, new practices)

4. Shared / couple

☐ Common goals (the family's future, projects, plans)

☐ Traditions and rituals (shared holidays, routines)

☐ Shared time (quality, not just quantity)

☐ Sense of "we" (identity of the couple, not just two individuals)

5. Social / external

☐ Recognition as a couple (from family, friends, and the community)

☐ Social support (to avoid isolation)

☐ Harmony with the surrounding environment (minimal external pressure)

My notes and additions

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Practice 3. Functions Checklist

This checklist will help you identify functions that work well and those that could be improved. Check or jot notes on the current state of each function.

1. Shared functions

☐ Communication – discussing emotions and issues

☐ Decision-making – how we choose and reach agreement

☐ Conflicts – how we handle conflict and restore trust

☐ Support – emotional (listening, hugging)

☐ Support – practical (help with tasks)

☐ Support – financial (contributions, mutual protection)

☐ Cooperation – division of responsibilities

☐ Cooperation – flexibility (switching roles)

☐ Intimacy – physical (sex, touch)

☐ Intimacy – emotional (trust, openness)

☐ Intimacy – intellectual (shared discussions)

☐ Joint development – projects, hobbies, learning

☐ Joint development – traditions and rituals

☐ Joint development – new experiences

2. Personal functions

☐ Self-care – health, rest, stress management

☐ Emotional work – self-reflection, self-regulation

☐ Self-worth – sense of personal significance

☐ Hobbies and creativity – music, drawing, sports, etc.

☐ Social connections – friends, community

☐ Profession and career – contribution, achievements

☐ Personal development – learning, skills

☐ Spiritual practices – faith, philosophy, meditation

☐ Novelty – experiments, travel

☐ Autonomy – personal space, time for oneself

My notes and additions

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Practice 4. Simplified Diagnostic

This simplified diagnostic will help each partner identify the main conditions, needs, and functions right now. Fill it out individually first, then discuss together.

Step 1. Individual selection

1. Choose up to 5 key conditions that influence your life right now:

_____

_____

2. Choose up to 5 needs that are most important to you right now:

_____

_____

3. Assess the functions:

- What I do well:

_____

- What I lack:

_____

Step 2. Short answers

Answer freely (in 2–3 sentences):

- What do I like about how we live now?

_____

- What is the hardest for me right now in our relationship?

_____

- Which of my personal strengths supports our relationship?

_____

- What do I need most from you right now?

_____

Step 3. Joint discussion

After filling it out individually, discuss together:

- Where the selected conditions and needs overlap, where they differ.
- What each person does well and where support is needed.
- Read your short answers to each other.

Practice 5. Individual Vision

This practice will help you articulate your vision of the future. Write your answers freely. It is important to write in the first person ("I want...", "I see myself...") so that the vision reflects your own desires and goals.

Questions for reflection

1. How do I see myself in 3-5 years?

_____

_____

2. How do I see our relationship in 3-5 years?

_____

_____

3. What is most important to me in a relationship?

_____

_____

4. Which conditions do I want to change in the future?

_____

_____

5. Which needs do I want to meet better than I do now?

_____

_____

6. Which functions (personal or shared) do I want to develop?

_____

_____

7. Which of my personal dreams and fantasies do I want to preserve, even if they are not fully realized?

_____

_____

Conclusion

After you complete it, discuss your vision with your partner. Comparing individual visions helps you find the common core and identify differences that can be incorporated into the shared picture of the future.

Practice 6. Change Table

This table will help translate your vision of the future into concrete steps. Fill it out together: define the current state, describe the desired future, specify the type of change (radical, compromise, or micro-change), and plan the steps.

Now	Desired future	Type of change	Example steps

Note: start with 3–5 key changes to avoid overload. Balance shared and personal steps.

Practice 7. Priority Matrix

This matrix helps you prioritize selected changes. Distribute them into four quadrants based on importance and urgency. Use it as a tool for a joint discussion.

Important and urgent (do immediately)	Important but not urgent (plan)
Not important but urgent (delegate or minimize)	Not important and not urgent (discard)

Note: Start by distributing 3–5 key changes. This helps you focus on what truly matters and reduces overload.

Practice 8. Retrospective Template

A retrospective is a joint discussion that helps you understand what works in your relationship and what can be improved. It is recommended to hold it monthly or quarterly.

Questions for discussion:

1. What went well for us during this period?

_____

_____

2. What was the hardest?

_____

_____

3. What can we do differently next time?

_____

_____

4. What am I grateful to you for?

_____

_____

5. What do I promise to try to change or improve?

_____

_____

Conclusion

A retrospective is not criticism, but a joint search for improvements. It is important to maintain a respectful tone and highlight positive moments.

Practice 9. RACI

This practice helps distribute roles and responsibilities in your relationship. The method is based on the RACI principle: Responsible (who does the work), Accountable (who is ultimately answerable and approves the result), Consulted (whose opinions are sought before a decision), Informed (who is kept updated after decisions and actions). Fill the table together to reduce misunderstandings and conflicts.

Area / task	Responsible (who does the work)	Accountable (who is ultimately answerable and approves the result)	Consulted (whose opinions are sought)	Informed (who is kept updated)
Finances (budget, payments)				
Household chores (cleaning, cooking)				
Children (school, activities)				
Relatives (communication, holidays)				
Leisure and vacation (planning)				

_____

_____

_____

Note: Roles may change over time. The key is transparency and mutual agreement.

Practice 10. Rituals Map

Traditions and rituals create a sense of stability and closeness in your relationship. They can be big family celebrations or small everyday habits. This map will help you record existing rituals and come up with new ones.

1. Our existing traditions and rituals

Examples: weekend breakfasts together, anniversary celebrations, annual vacation.

_____

_____

_____

2. Which new traditions do we want to introduce

Examples: a monthly board-game night, walks together, a family photo album.

_____

_____

_____

3. Personal rituals I would like to keep

Examples: evening reading, morning coffee alone, sports.

_____

_____

_____

Conclusion

Traditions and rituals create a sense of "our world". Even small habits can become the foundation of closeness and warmth.

Practice 11. Personal Functions

This checklist helps each partner identify which personal functions support their life and relationship. Check which ones are developed and which need attention. Personal functions

☐ Self-care – health, rest, stress management

☐ Emotional work – self-reflection, self-regulation

☐ Self-worth – sense of personal significance

☐ Hobbies and creativity – music, drawing, sports, etc.

☐ Social connections – friends, community

☐ Profession and career – contribution, achievements

☐ Personal development – learning, skills

☐ Spiritual practices – faith, philosophy, meditation

☐ Novelty – experiments and travel

☐ Autonomy – personal space, time for oneself

My notes

What I do well:

_____

_____

What I want to improve:

_____

_____

Conclusion

Developing personal functions reduces the load on shared functions. When each person feels whole and steady, the relationship becomes more harmonious.

Practice 12. Shared Vision

This practice helps you form a shared picture of the future. First, each partner shares their individual vision; then you create a shared one together. It should include a common core (what matches) and respectful acknowledgment of differences (what remains personal).

1. Our common core (overlaps)

What is important for both of us in the future:

_____

_____

_____

2. Our differences (space for the personal)

What remains personal for each:

_____

_____

_____

3. Joint formulation of the vision

Together, formulate 2–3 paragraphs that describe your shared vision:

_____

_____

_____

Conclusion

A shared vision is a guideline, not a rigid plan. It helps you move in the same direction while preserving each partner's individuality.

Book Updates

2025-09-08

- Added PDF download section.

2025-09-07

- Standards: Intro headings now "CLRF Vision and Mission" and "CLRF Values and Beliefs".

2025-09-06

- Translation polish and terminology cleanup across Practices 1–4 and Chapters 8–10.
- Standards: Practice 4 renamed "Simplified Diagnostic"; Conclusion now references "Couple Life Reflection Framework".

2025-09-05

- Initial English release covering Preface, Chapters 1–10, and Practices 1–12.