



GREAT LAKES  
COUNSELING GROUP

## A Guide to Productive Discussions About Relationship Ambivalence

Ambivalence in a relationship is a common experience. It's normal to have mixed feelings and uncertainties. What's important is how you and your partner address these feelings together. This guide will help you have productive discussions about relationship ambivalence.

Here are some example statements to help you and your partner start a discussion about relationship ambivalence:

"I've been feeling a bit uncertain about our relationship lately, and I want us to talk openly about it."

"I've noticed that we both seem to have some mixed feelings about where our relationship is heading. Can we talk about that?"

"I want you to know that I care about us and our future together, but there are some things I've been struggling with."

"I've been doing some self-reflection, and I think it's important for us to have an honest conversation about how we're feeling."

"I love you, and I think we need to discuss the doubts and uncertainties that have been on my mind."

"Our relationship is important to me, and I believe we should address the ambivalence we've been experiencing."

"I've noticed some changes in how I feel about us, and I believe it's crucial for us to explore these feelings together." Remember to use "I" statements to express your own feelings and avoid making your partner defensive. These statements can serve as a respectful and considerate way to initiate the discussion.

Choose the Right Time and Place:

Find a quiet, comfortable setting free from distractions.

Choose a time when both of you are relaxed and not rushed.

Express Yourself Clearly:

Begin by sharing your feelings of ambivalence. Use "I" statements to avoid blame.

Be honest but respectful. Avoid attacking or criticizing your partner.

Here are some examples:

### **Partner Leaning In:**

"I feel a strong connection to you, and I want us to work through our challenges together."

"I'm committed to making our relationship work, and I'd like to understand your concerns better."

"I value what we have, and I'm willing to make changes to improve our relationship."

"I've been thinking about our future, and I want to discuss how we can move forward positively."

"I believe in the potential of our relationship, and I'm open to finding solutions to our issues."

### **Partner Leaning Out:**

"I've been feeling unsure about our relationship, and I think it's essential to be honest about it."

"I'm struggling with some doubts, and I want to talk about them without hurting you."

"I care about you, but I'm not sure if I can fully commit right now, and I need to share this with you."

"I've been questioning our compatibility, and I think it's essential for us to address these concerns."

"I need some space to figure out my feelings, and I hope we can have an open conversation about it."



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These "I" statements can help both partners express their thoughts and emotions while maintaining open and respectful communication about their ambivalence in the relationship.

### Listen Actively:

**Let your partner express their feelings without interruption.**

Show empathy and understanding, even if you disagree.

Summarize what you've heard to ensure you understand correctly.

### Explore the Reasons:

Together, explore the reasons behind your ambivalence.

Discuss specific situations or behaviors that contribute to your feelings.

### Clarify Expectations:

Talk about your individual and shared expectations for the relationship.

Be open to adjusting these expectations if needed.

### Seek Professional Help:

If the ambivalence persists, consider seeking guidance from a relationship counselor.

A trained therapist can provide a safe space to explore your feelings.

### Discuss the Future:

Talk about what you both envision for your relationship.

Explore possible solutions, changes, or compromises.

### Take Breaks When Needed:

If emotions run high, it's okay to take a break and return to the conversation later.

Use this time to reflect on what's been discussed.

### Practice Self-Care:

Relationship discussions can be emotionally draining. Prioritize self-care to reduce stress.

### Make Decisions Together:

Ultimately, decide together what steps to take based on your discussions.

Whether it's working on the relationship or considering separation, make mutual choices.

### Conclusion:

Productive discussions about relationship ambivalence require patience, empathy, and open communication. By approaching these conversations with understanding and respect, you can work through your ambivalence together, leading to a healthier, more informed decision about your relationship's future.