Why Do We Keep Having the Same Fight?

A reflection sheet. Nothing to fix, nothing to get right.

This sheet is for noticing, not for solving. Take a pen, pick one recent fight that felt familiar, and let the questions below walk through it slowly. You can answer all of them, one of them, or none. Leave blank whatever doesn't fit. There is no right answer, and no one is grading it.

1 · THE SCRIPT

Write the first sentence of your last familiar fight, word for word. Then the reply that usually comes back.

2 · THE BODY

When does it actually begin: with the first sentence, or earlier? A key in the door, a name on the phone, a certain kind of quiet. Where do you first feel it?

jaw ☐ chest ☐ stomach ☐ hands ☐ throat ☐ somewhere else: _____

3 · THE QUIET QUESTION

Under the loud sentence there is often a quieter question. Complete this for yourself, and then, as kindly as you can, for the other person.

What I say:

What I might really be asking:

(Some people's quiet questions: Do I matter to you? Am I enough? Will you stay? Do you see how much I'm carrying?)

4 · CLOSER OR QUIETER

When it heats up, what do you tend to do: move closer, louder, to get a response, or go quiet to protect yourself? And what does the other person tend to do?

5 · THE THING THAT FLIPPED

Think of something you first loved about this person that now irritates you. (Spontaneous became irresponsible. Steady became boring.) Notice how strongly it bothers you. Is there any part of you that has gone quiet, or been set aside, in that same place?

6 · THE LIFE AROUND THE FIGHT

In the days before your last familiar fight, how were your sleep, your money worries, your workload? Who in your home carries the unseen work: the remembering, the planning, the keeping track?

7 · THE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

How were fights handled in the home you grew up in: out loud, in silence, never? Are there other voices in your fights (parents, in-laws, a culture's idea of how a couple should behave) even when they aren't physically present?

8 · WHAT I SAW, AND WHAT I ADDED

Describe the moment that set it off the way a camera would record it: only what could be seen and heard. Then, beside it, write the meaning you added.

What happened:

The meaning I added:

9 · WHICH OF THESE FELT LIKE YOURS?

- ☐ My body's alarm, going off before a word was said
- ☐ An older scene, replaying in a new room
- ☐ The quiet question under the loud sentence
- ☐ A tired, overfull life
- ☐ The family and the culture in the background
- ☐ What I added to what I saw
- ☐ More than one of these, taking turns

If you'd like, write one line about the one you ticked.

This sheet accompanies Episode 12 of From the Therapy Room. It is education, not therapy. If you're struggling, or if a fight ever leaves you feeling unsafe, please reach out to someone you trust or a professional.

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