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FIELD GUIDE / LATENESS PATTERN

The One-Page Version

Many couples argue about lateness as though it were about minutes, but for the partner who waits, the hurt underneath is usually the feeling that their time does not matter, and for the partner who runs late, it is often the feeling that nothing they do is ever enough. Think of a person who looks out the window, sees rain, and feels their mood sink. The rain did not do that on its own; in between sits a belief, “now I will be late and the day is ruined,” too fast to notice. Lateness runs on the same chain. “Five minutes” becomes twenty-five, and the belief that fills in for the partner at the door is “I don’t matter enough to be on time for,” while the late partner is filling in “nothing I do is enough.” Neither belief is a fact, and both can be edited, which is good news, because the partner who says “five minutes” usually believes it: most people forecast from the best case. The fix has two halves, a system for the time, so it stops depending on a promise, and the belief said out loud, so the wait stops meaning things nobody intended.

Three ways the conversation can begin:

- 01 | If you are the one who waits: “I’ve started bracing every time you say five minutes, and I don’t like who that turns me into.”
- 02 | If you are the one who runs late: “Honest answer, fifteen. Go sit down. I’ll come find you when I’m actually walking out.”
- 03 | On arrival: “I know it wasn’t ten minutes for you. Thank you for waiting. I’m here now.”

This page is the short version of *The Lateness Pattern Fix*. The full Field Guide adds every script, the worksheet and a one-page cheat sheet.

couples-conversations.com/fg-lateness-fix

One important note: This program is not in place of therapy or clinical treatment or diagnosis, but for education. Many relationships struggle with various issues; this is normal. However, they should always feel safe. If there are any mental health concerns, or concerns for safety, or if the relationship feels dangerous in any way, please seek professional support rather than continuing in this program. When in doubt, it is best to consult with a proper therapist.