

## VULNERABILITY FOR DEEPER CONNECTION

Adapted from Chapter 8 of Relationship Communication Decoded

Understand your current stance on **emotional openness, safety, and intimacy**. This self-check covers beliefs and behaviors, as lasting closeness involves not just what we feel, but what we consistently do.

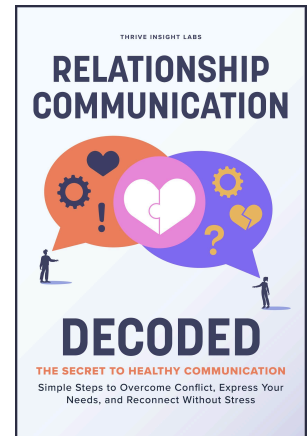
**Important Note:** This assessment is not intended to be a clinical or diagnostic tool. It is designed for personal insight and reflection on relationships only. If you are experiencing distress or mental health challenges, please seek support from a qualified professional.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Read each item and indicate how well it describes you from **1 (Not at all like me) to 5 (Very much like me)**. There are no right or wrong answers, just your honest reflection.

### ITEMS

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. I worry my partner will pull away if I share too much.         | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 2. I can express difficult feelings without blaming my partner.   | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 3. I help create a space where both of us can speak without fear. | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 4. I regularly share personal feelings with my partner.           | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 5. I feel emotionally close to my partner.                        | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 6. It's hard for me to show emotional weakness.                   | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 7. I invite emotional honesty, even when it's uncomfortable.      | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 8. I avoid judging or dismissing my partner's emotions.           | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 9. We set aside time to check in emotionally.                     | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 10. I trust my partner with my deeper self.                       | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 11. I've been hurt before when I opened up.                       | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 12. I stay present when my partner is sharing something raw.      | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 13. I listen with care—even when I don't fully understand.        | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 14. I reveal things about myself that I rarely tell others.       | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 15. I experience a strong sense of "us" in this relationship.     | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 16. I feel safer keeping some parts of myself hidden.             | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 17. I ask curious questions when my partner is vulnerable.        | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 18. I respond in ways that make my partner feel seen and safe.    | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 19. We have rituals that help us connect on a deeper level.       | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |
| 20. I feel known and accepted by my partner.                      | [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] |



## SCORING

Group your answers by topic and total the score in each area (each score will range from **4 to 20**):

- **Fear of Vulnerability:** 1, 6, 11, 16 = \_\_\_\_
- **Vulnerability Communication Skills:** 2, 7, 12, 17 = \_\_\_\_
- **Creating Emotional Safety:** 3, 8, 13, 18 = \_\_\_\_
- **Vulnerability Habits & Frequency:** 4, 9, 14, 19 = \_\_\_\_
- **Perceived Intimacy:** 5, 10, 15, 20 = \_\_\_\_

## INTERPRETATION GUIDE

Your scores across these areas offer vital insights into your approach to vulnerability, a cornerstone of deep connection. Remember, these scores highlight areas for growth and deeper understanding, not fixed achievements. Each insight is an opportunity to enhance your connection and move forward in your growth journey.

### Fear of Vulnerability

*Your tendency to hesitate or hold back from emotional openness*

- **Profound Reserve (16–20):** You have a significant, consistent tendency to hold back. Recognize this pattern to explore its roots and consciously choose moments of courageous openness.
- **Developing Caution (11–15):** You experience some hesitation. Understanding this caution is key to gradually expanding your comfort with vulnerability.
- **Embracing Openness (4–10):** You generally approach vulnerability with willingness. Continue to deepen this strength.

### Vulnerability Communication Skills

*Your ability to express your authentic self and needs*

- **Established Skills (16–20):** You effectively articulate your authentic self and needs. This strength fosters profound mutual understanding and connection.
- **Cultivating Skills (11–15):** You have a good base, but can deepen consistency, especially in challenging conversations. Actively develop these skills for richer interactions.
- **Exploring Skills (4–10):** You're in the early stages of developing these skills. This is a powerful starting point to explore how expressing your true self can lead to transformative connection.

## Creating Emotional Safety

*Your contribution to an environment where vulnerability feels safe*

- **Established Safety (16–20):** You consistently contribute to a safe environment for vulnerability. This cornerstone fosters deep trust and authentic connection.
- **Cultivating Safety (11–15):** You actively work towards creating emotional safety. Focus on expanding your capacity to create an even more secure space.
- **Exploring Safety (4–10):** You're in the early stages of building emotional safety. This foundational discovery is crucial for creating an environment where open hearts thrive.

## Vulnerability Habits & Frequency

*How often and consistently you engage in vulnerable sharing*

- **Established Habits (16–20):** You consistently engage in vulnerable sharing. This high comfort with openness fosters continuous deepening of intimacy.
- **Cultivating Habits (11–15):** You actively share, and can increase frequency and consistency. Cultivate these habits for a more regular practice and stronger connection.
- **Exploring Habits (4–10):** You're building consistent habits of vulnerable sharing. This is an exciting starting point to explore the transformative impact of regular, authentic openness.

## Perceived Intimacy

*Your perception of depth and closeness in your relationship*

- **Established Intimacy (16–20):** You consistently perceive profound depth and closeness. This testament to strong connection provides a rich foundation for growth.
- **Cultivating Intimacy (11–15):** You experience significant intimacy and can continue to deepen its layers. Nurture this area for even greater fulfillment.
- **Exploring Intimacy (4–10):** You're in the early stages of perceiving deep intimacy. This inspiring starting point offers a powerful opportunity to explore new dimensions of connection.

## REFLECTION

*Take a moment to reflect on your results. Capture your thoughts in the space provided below.*

How does vulnerability currently show up in your relationship, and how does that align with your ideal level of closeness?

In what ways do you feel emotionally safe enough to be vulnerable, and where might there be opportunities to build even deeper safety?

## NEXT STEPS

You've gained valuable insight into your approach to boundaries and trust repair. Return to Chapter 8 of *Relationship Communication Decoded* to delve deeper into practical strategies for setting healthy boundaries, navigating boundary challenges, and fostering lasting trust in your relationship.