Hold Me Tight Conversation
Sharing Fears and Needs

1. Taking turns, each of you now focus on one key past relationship with a parent, lover or close friend and share with your partner what the surface feeling is when you stay with this focus.

Can you now explore what your strongest fear/anxiety was in this relationship and try to pinpoint what you longed for from this person. While you do this, your partner’s role is to listen and help you feel safe enough to share, or to ask a few short questions if he or she finds this description hard to understand.

2. It is now time to try the Hold Me Tight conversation between the two of you. One of you will be the speaker. It is best if the person who is usually more withdrawing goes first.

   A. Begin by going back to the feelings you identified in Finding the Raw Spots conversation.

      If you listen in to these feelings, you can usually find, at the core of these feelings, a fear or anxiety that involves being rejected or abandoned by your partner. This fear is wired into our brains.

      Everyone has them. See if you can pinpoint this fear and feel it in your body.

   B. When you are in touch with the fear, get a sense of what response or specific reassurance from your partner would help you with this fear right now?

   C. See if you can tell your partner in a short, simple and direct way what it is that you need from him/her when this fear comes up. This need or longing is usually for some kind of acceptance, caring, comfort or reassurance.

      If this is hard to do, here is a simple list taken from page 163 of Hold Me Tight.

TIP: It might sound something like this:

I need to feel or sense that:

• I am so special to you and that you really value our relationship. I need that reassurance that I am number one with you and that nothing is more important to you than us.
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- I am wanted by you, as a partner and a lover, and that hearing from me and being with me is important to you.

- I am loved and accepted, with my failings and imperfections. I can’t be perfect for you.

- I am needed. You want me close.

- I am safe because you care about my feelings, hurts and needs.

- I can count on you to be there for me, to not leave me alone when I need you the most.

- I will be heard and respected. Please don’t dismiss me or leap into thinking the worst of me. Give me a chance to learn how to be with you.

- I can count on you to hear me and to put everything else aside.

- I can ask you to hold me and to understand that just asking is very hard for me.

3. As the listening partner, you just attempt to take in this confiding and hear what it is that the other longs for. You are to work on receiving this new message and appreciate the risk your partner is taking to share this with you.

If you wish to check if what you have heard is accurate, that is fine. If you wish to respond and this is easy for you, that is fine and if you don’t wish to respond at this time, it is not part of the in-class exercise.

4. Stop here. We will process this first pass with the large group before we change Speaker and Listener roles.