

What I Need from Us

I didn't write these words, but they say what I've been struggling to say on my own.

I love you, and I want us to be together for a long time. Not just as two people existing side by side, but as genuine partners who know each other better than anyone alive.

But lately I've felt our partnership sliding. You have your own goals you've been working on, and those goals are important to me, too, but it's felt like keeping us connected is entirely up to me. I try to initiate conversation, tend to our emotional connection, and hold everything together. It's a lot to carry on my own.

I'm struggling. I need your support.

Here's what I need from you:

- 1. To feel cared for.** Not in ways that are transactional or sexual, but in the small, tender ones: a hug when I don't ask for it, cuddling, a reassuring touch. Affectionate warmth that says *I see you* without needing a reason.
- 2. To feel emotionally seen.** I need you to be curious about me: how I'm doing, what I'm thinking, what's going on inside. Not to fix it, just to care about it. When you listen that way, I feel like I matter to you.
- 3. To know you're invested in this relationship.** Relationships don't run on autopilot. They need ongoing attention, the same way everything else you care about does. That means working on communicating, repairing after conflict, and staying connected even when life gets hard.

I need to know you're open to working on those things. Not because you're doing anything wrong, not because what you're doing isn't good enough, but because love takes both of us.

I'm not asking you to become someone you're not. I'm asking you to grow with me, so our love can last. I believe in this life we've created, and I know we can make it stronger if we both do this together.

Please let me know whether you agree to work on us. I'm also open to talking with you further about it.

If you'd like to understand this more, the Gottman Institute has books written for exactly this. *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* is a good place to start. Couples therapy is also something I'm open to, if you are.