

UPPER-LIMIT PATTERNS

In close relationships, there is ultimately only one pattern you need to be aware of: We have an upper limit on how much love and positive energy we allow ourselves to experience. Genuine contact with another person gets us high, and this trips the upper-limits switch, making us want to come back down to a more familiar level. We call this the “Upper-Limit Pattern” and use the acronym “ULP”. The alternative to upper limits is to notice when we are starting to get into something negative, recognize it as an upper-limit issue, acknowledge it and take steps to restore positive energy.

The question that we find most useful when we notice ourselves getting into negative energy is, “Why might this be happening right now? Is there anything I want to **prevent or protect** myself from; **punish** myself or someone else for; OR give **permission** for?”

There are several ways we limit positive energy in relationships. One is by **starting arguments**. We may have fear of intimacy, and unconsciously create arguments to prevent ourselves from exchanging intimacy. We (Bob & Marlene) used to argue frequently on Friday nights, at the beginning of a weekend where there was a potential for leisure and fun. Many people use arguments about sex or money to bring themselves down. We choose drama and adrenalin instead of intimacy.

Another way we limit positive energy is by **withholding significant communications**. We get scared of being close, for example, and instead of revealing that, we withdraw and swallow the communication. When we withdraw and withhold communication, then the other person starts to look unsafe to us.

Another way we limit positive energy is by needing to **control or dominate** the other person, or by needing to be controlled or dominated. If we always have to be right, for example, there is not room for happiness and co-creativity. Underneath control, there’s usually a fear which we haven’t acknowledged (or maybe even felt).

Projection limits positive energy. Projection happens when you attribute to others something that’s true for you. The Taoist teacher, Lao-Tzu, tells the following story. “Once upon a time a man whose ax was missing suspected his neighbor’s son. The boy walked like a thief, looked like a thief, and spoke like a thief. But the man found his ax while digging in the valley, and next time he saw his neighbor’s son, he walked, looked, and spoke like any other child.” A vast amount of energy can be liberated in relationships by dropping the habit of projection.

Much of the energy in relationships is drained in **power struggles**: who’s right, who’s wrong, and who’s the biggest victim. When both people are not taking full healthy responsibility, it is an entanglement, not a relationship. Relationships exist between equals. It is possible to have absolute equality and no struggle in relationships. The requirement: both people must drop projection and see that they are 100% the creators of their reality. With the energy saved from avoiding power struggles, much more can be created than could have been created on your own.

The upper-limits pattern is especially evident as we open up to more love and energy in our

relationships; we begin to flush old glitches out of the system. Our energy thermostat is not yet reset higher, and as we feel new levels of love and intimacy, sometimes this sets off alarms in us. Many of us unconsciously believe that we don't deserve to feel good and therefore create reasons not to feel good. We may also be getting messages from the culture around us that we shouldn't feel good (or be so expanded). Symptoms of the upper-limit pattern are irritability, fault-finding, boredom, sleepiness, feeling less, messing up. If possible, catch these as they are first beginning, before you and projection have a grip on each other.

Are you willing to make a commitment to expanding your ability to feel love and positive energy?

The following techniques are helpful in conscious loving and have been known to work to restore positive energy:

1. Increase your upper limit a little bit at a time. Don't try to go from your usual level to feeling good all the time; that is a recipe for failure. And don't blame yourself or someone else for reaching your upper limit, we all have them. Our job is to become aware of them.
2. Take plenty of time and space off from the relationship. A close relationship is powerfully transformative, and you need lots of rest time to integrate the learnings from it. Go for a walk, sit under a tree, play a solo game, look at the stars. Relationships need both times of closeness and independence.
3. Tell the unarguable truth, especially about what is going on in your body. Avoid chomping down on the big Hershey bar of projection.
4. Breathe by yourself or together.
5. Meditate by yourself or together.
6. Let the other person (and yourself) go through complete feeling cycles. If the other person is sad, support them in crying to completion. don't try to help them feel better – help them feel more. Hold each other until the “unwinding” is complete and you feel grounded again.
7. Give yourself plenty of non-sexual intimate touch. Sex is great, of course, but many people do not give enough attention to non-sexual touch. Humans need touch in large quantities.
8. After periods of intense intimacy, get grounded in a positive way (many people ground themselves by getting sick, or having an accident, or an argument). Some good ways of grounding: a massage, a walk, dancing, completing important communications, cleaning up your desk, exercise until you sweat.
9. Have a pillowfight or play with your aggressive energy in safe ways.
10. Have at least three friends who will call you on your act, gently remind you that you create your own reality, remind you to breathe, and open up to love once again.
11. When you notice symptoms (e.g. irritability, fault-finding, boredom, sleepiness, feeling less, messing up) ask yourself “why is this issue coming up at this time?”
12. When you notice a criticism or irritability coming up, imagine the irritability as an early warning signal; instead of blaming take a few breaths and let yourself feel.

RESOLVING UPPER LIMITS PATTERNS
(Taming the Upper Limits Dragon)

WHAT PATTERNS occur after a period where things are working smoothly?

WHAT THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES occur just as cooperation and collaboration begin to slide?

My most common UPPER LIMITS BEHAVIOURS ARE (i.e. worry thoughts, getting sick, starting an argument):

WHEN do I typically experience irritability, fault-finding, boredom, sleepiness, feeling less, messing up?

HOW LONG can I typically stay in a state of love and positive energy before I reach my upper limit?

How can I befriend my upper limits patterns? Create an ACTION STEP for yourself:
