

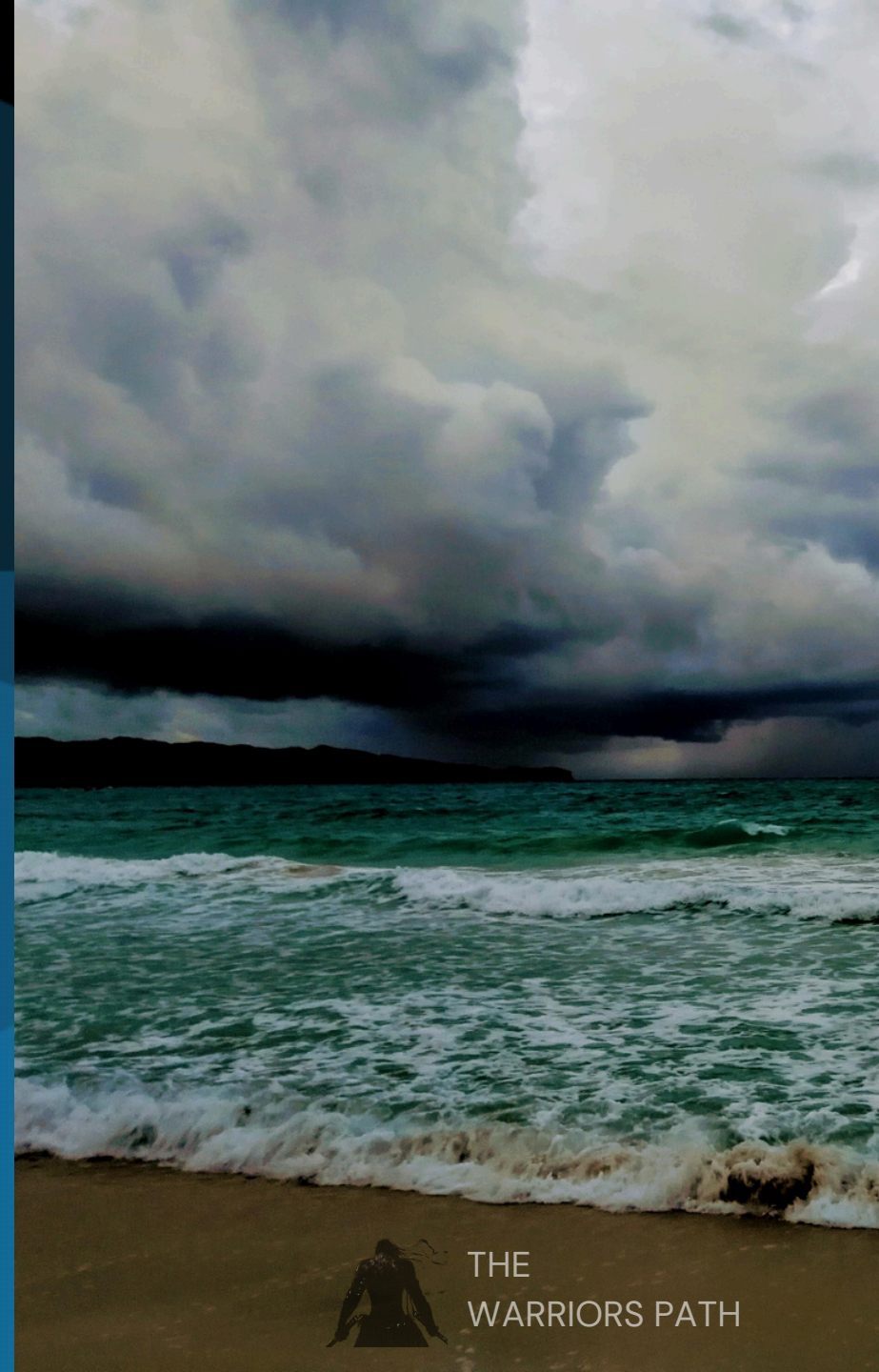
Relational Triggers

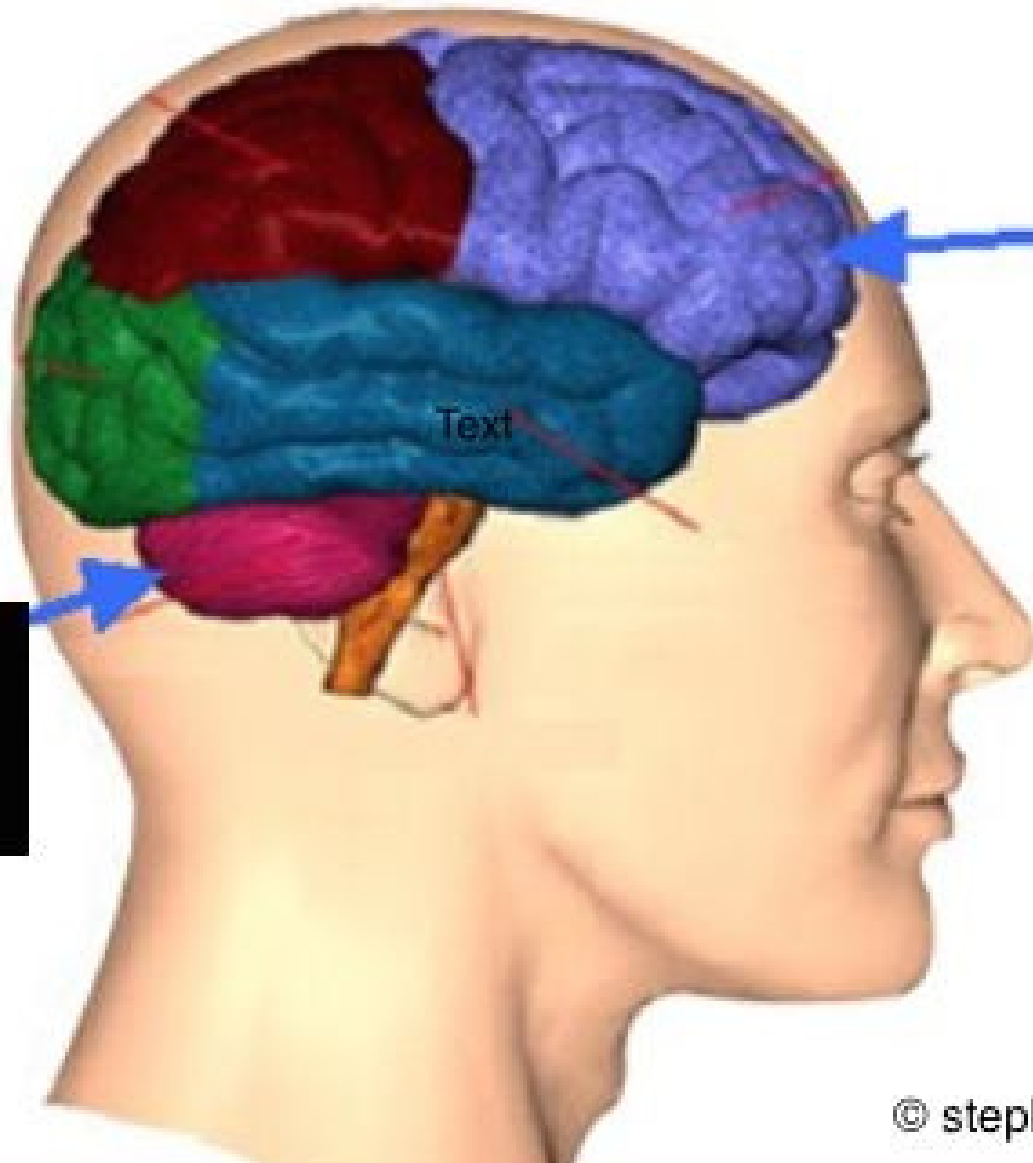


THE
WARRIORS PATH

What is a “Trigger”

- Triggers” refer to emotional reactions that surface when certain scenarios, expressions, behaviors, or actions evoke memories of previous traumatic events. These triggers can provoke intense feelings ranging from anxiety and fear to sadness and anger, which may appear exaggerated compared to the current situation.
- Within the sphere of close relationships, triggers often stem from unresolved past issues, originating from earlier relationships or childhood experiences. They can be activated by any occurrence that resembles or recalls a past trauma. For instance, if an individual has endured constant criticism in a prior relationship, they might react defensively or become upset when their present partner provides constructive feedback. Despite the partner’s good intentions, the individual may interpret it as a threat or personal assault, influenced by their past experiences.
- Triggers may also link back to a former relationship marked by unfaithfulness. Simple acts, like a partner returning home late, can set off feelings of suspicion and mistrust, even when there are valid explanations. Comprehending triggers in a close relationship is vital because these emotional responses can cause misunderstandings, disputes, and strains between partners. If one partner fails to grasp the reason behind the other’s intense reactions to certain triggers, it can lead to confusion and harm the relationship.





Thinking
Brain

Fast
5x more
powerful

Emotional
Brain

Irrational
Emotional
Illogical

Rational
Thinking
Logical

Slow
5x weaker

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It's Neurological before it's Psychological

Stimulus Perception: When an event triggers us, our sensory systems detect the stimulus and relay the information to our brain.

Threat Identification: The brain, particularly the amygdala—an almond-shaped component crucial for emotional processing—assesses the stimulus to determine if it's a threat, drawing upon past experiences archived in our memory.

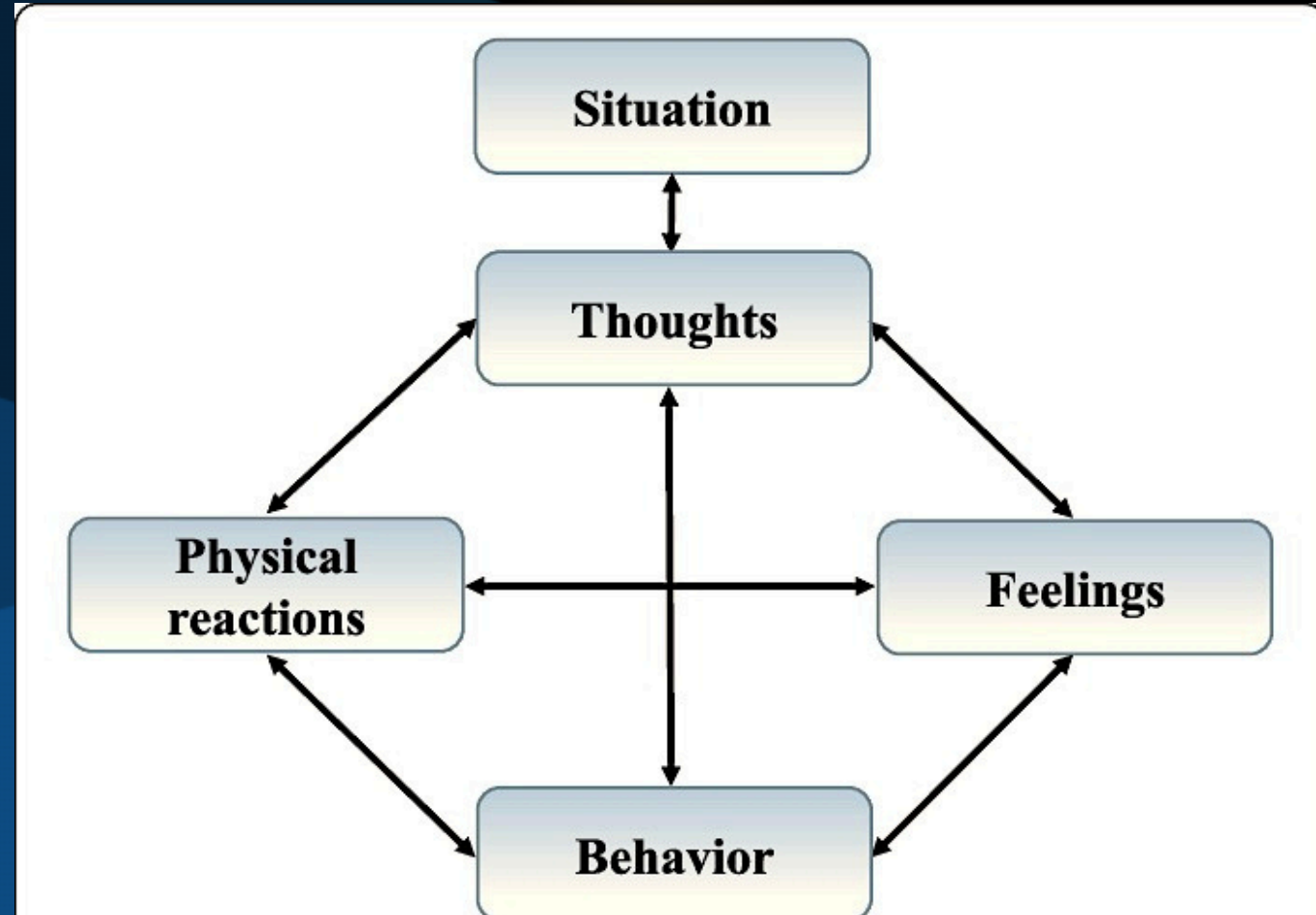
Psychological Response: When the stimulus is perceived as a threat, the amygdala sets off a fear response. This leads to the secretion of stress hormones and the activation of the fight-flight-freeze response, all occurring before we become consciously aware of the threat.

Conscious Awareness: The data is subsequently conveyed to the prefrontal cortex, which is tasked with advanced cognitive functions such as decision-making and self-regulation. It is in this region that we gain conscious recognition of our emotions and begin to mentally navigate our responses. This is when we start process our emotions on a psychological level.



Cognitive Behavioral Pentagon

- **Situation (Environment):** This pertains to the external situations or occurrences we come across, encompassing our location, the people around us, and the activities taking place in our environment
- **Thoughts (Cognition):** These encompass our interpretations, convictions, and viewpoints regarding ourselves, others, and the broader world. Emotions, or feelings, are the emotional reactions we have to a given situation, shaped by our thought processes.
- **Physical Reaction (Physiology):** These are the physiological reactions of our body to the situation, including symptoms like a rapid heartbeat, perspiration on the palms, or an upset stomach. Such responses may be components of the fight-flight-freeze reaction, initiated by our brain's assessment of the situation as perilous.
- **Behaviors (Actions):** These constitute the behaviors we exhibit in reaction to our cognitions, feelings, and bodily experiences.



The External vs. The Internal

- **External factors:** refer to circumstances or behaviors outside of ourselves, such as our partner's actions or words. For example, a partner arriving home late from work is considered an external event.
- **Internal factors:** involve our thoughts, feelings, memories, or beliefs that are triggered by these external events. For instance, feeling anxious when a partner is late due to past feelings of betrayal. It's essential to differentiate between these factors because while we cannot control external events, we have the ability to manage our internal reactions. Another person's behavior does not automatically trigger us; it only becomes a trigger when it touches sensitive areas in our psyche, often linked to past experiences stored in our implicit memory.
- **When triggered:** intense emotional responses may arise, causing us to expect the other person resolve the situation or improve our mood. Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand that our emotions are greatly influenced by our thoughts, interpretations, and past experiences, empowering us to regulate our emotional responses.



The Real Behavior is Never the Trigger

- Triggers affect individuals uniquely, shaped by personal history and sensitivities. For instance, a crowded space may thrill one person but overwhelm another. The roots of our triggers are internal, stemming from past experiences and core beliefs
- Recognizing your own triggers helps you maintain self-esteem independent of others' actions, avoid taking things personally, and be mindful of how your behavior might trigger someone else. For example: Instead of arguing about your spouse coming late, (The trigger), Instead discuss your feelings of possible disrespect or feeling insecure the action evokes, which is the source of the trigger.

What triggered me?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. I felt excluded. | 13. I felt like the bad guy. |
| 2. I felt powerless. | 14. I felt forgotten. |
| 3. I felt unheard. | 15. I felt unsafe. |
| 4. I felt scolded. | 16. I felt unloved. |
| 5. I felt judged. | 17. I felt like that was unfair. |
| 6. I felt blamed. | 18. I felt frustrated. |
| 7. I felt disrespected. | 19. I felt disconnected. |
| 8. I felt a lack of affection. | 20. I felt trapped. |
| 9. I felt uncared for. | 21. I felt a lack of passion. |
| 10. I felt lonely. | 22. I felt like I couldn't speak. |
| 11. I felt ignored. | 23. I felt manipulated. |
| 12. I felt like I couldn't be honest. | 24. I felt controlled. |



Implicit Emotional Memory–

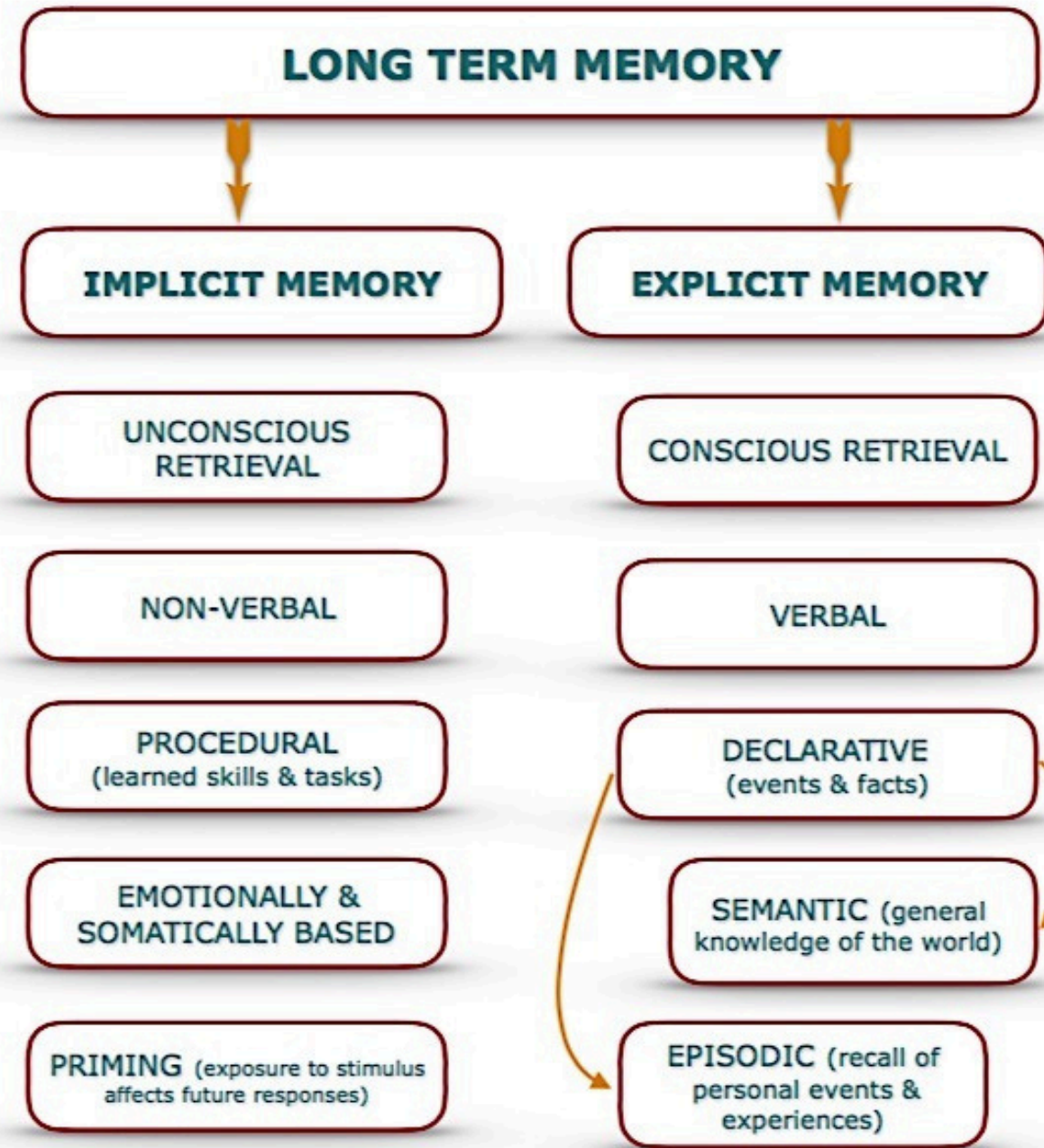
An unconscious emotional memory that is triggered by a situation in the present moment.

Implicit memory refers to the subconscious storage of information that shapes our actions and emotional responses, even though we may not be aware of its influence. It includes the skills and experiences acquired early in life, which persistently affect our behavior. For example, the process of learning to ride a bike is etched into our implicit memory; we might not recall the learning phase, but the ability to ride remains with us.

In the context of relationships, implicit memories often underlie our emotional reactions. A person may have endured an early traumatic event in the past, and while the explicit memory of the event may fade, the associated emotions remain deeply embedded in their implicit memory. Consequently, encountering a reminiscent scenario in a current relationship can activate these early emotions, leading to a profound emotional responses. The complexity arises because these memories are typically beyond the reach of our conscious awareness. Thus, an individual might experience a potent negative emotion in reaction to a certain trigger, without comprehending the cause, as the originating incident is not consciously remembered



THE
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What is Ego and and its Function

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In the realm of psychology, the ego frequently serves as a safeguard, preserving our self-perception and shielding us from emotional distress. This can occasionally obstruct our introspective abilities, making it difficult to recognize and accept our shortcomings or vulnerabilities, especially when faced with certain stimuli.

Here is how it works.....



“The ego is an
identity of our
own construction,
an identity
which is false...”



THE
WARRIORS PATH

Preserving Self-Image: The ego strives to uphold a specific self-image. Acknowledging mistakes or identifying unhealthy behaviors can threaten this self-image, causing the ego to resist self-reflection.

Avoiding Discomfort: Self-reflection, especially when it involves recognizing our faults or insecurities, can be uncomfortable or even painful. To avoid this discomfort, the ego often denies the need for introspection

Fear of Vulnerability: Recognizing our triggers and the implicit memories behind them often means exposing our vulnerabilities, which can be intimidating. To shield us from perceived threats like rejection or judgment, the ego may resist this process.

Maintaining Control: The ego prefers to feel in control. Realizing that our emotional reactions may be shaped by past experiences, often beyond our conscious control, can be unsettling. To maintain a sense of control, the ego might resist this realization.



Example:

Trigger – External Event: Your partner offers you some constructive criticism about a trip your planned



Thoughts: You might think, "They don't appreciate my effort," or "I'm not good enough."



Emotions: These thoughts lead to feelings of rejection, inadequacy, and sadness



Behavior: You might become defensive, pull back, or respond with a counter-criticism.



Motive of Behavior: Your defensive behavior is a way to shield yourself from what you perceive as an attack on your self-worth and abilities.



Implicit Memory Being Triggered: This reaction might stem from an implicit memory of a parent who was overly critical during your childhood. While you may not consciously remember specific instances of this criticism, the feelings of inadequacy and rejection are deeply ingrained.



Goal to Solve It: The aim is to change how you interpret and respond to criticism, seeing it as an opportunity for improvement rather than an attack on your worth

Example:

Trigger – External Event: Your partner doesn't respond to your text messages in a timely manner



Thoughts: You might think, "They're ignoring me," or "They're not prioritizing me, "They're rejecting me".



Possible Reactions: You might find yourself sending several follow-up messages, emotionally withdrawing, or confronting your partner angrily about their lack of response



Reason for Behavior: Your reaction is probably an effort to seek attention, reassurance, or acknowledgment from your partner.



Implicit Memory Trigger: Your reaction might be linked to past experiences of feeling neglected or ignored by parents, past partners, or friends. Even if you don't consciously remember these incidents, the feelings of anxiety and insecurity when ignored are deeply ingrained in your implicit memory



Goal: The aim isn't to make sure your partner always replies right away, but to manage your emotional response when they don't and to express your needs constructively. It involves recognizing that a delayed response doesn't necessarily mean neglect or lack of care



What to Say: Constructively express your feelings to your partner. For example, "When you don't respond for a long time, I feel anxious and ignored. I understand you can get busy, but can we find a way to communicate that doesn't leave me worrying?"

Misdirected Goal: Instead of aiming to comprehend the trigger and pursue personal growth, there might be a shift towards attempting to control or alter the behavior of the other person. For example, the emphasis could be on ensuring the other person always arrives home on time, without acknowledging the feelings of concern or lack of respect that arise when they are late.

Using Blaming Language: Instead of utilizing "I"-or "We"statements" to communicate feelings and needs, individuals may resort to blaming or accusatory language. This approach can heighten conflicts and hinder the path to finding a resolution. For instance, instead of expressing your feelings, you might opt for a statement like, "You're so irresponsible. You're always late, and you don't care about anyone but yourself." You could say instead, "I feel anxious when you don't communicate to me that you'll be late. How can we move forward together and agree on a best practice idea to resolve this."

