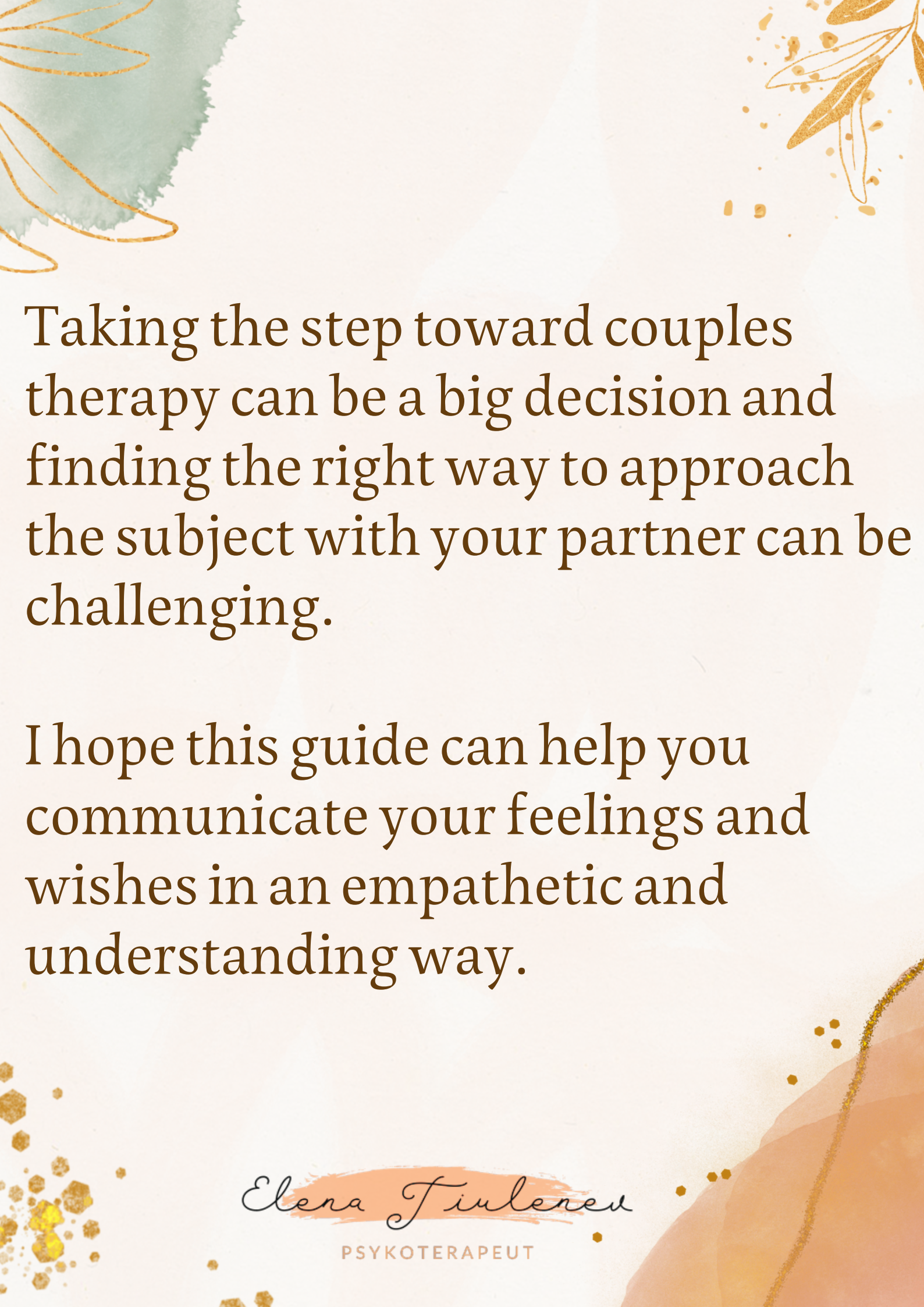




7 gentle steps for you who
dreams of inviting your
partner to couples therapy!

Elena Tiulenev

PSYKOTERAPEUT





Taking the step toward couples therapy can be a big decision and finding the right way to approach the subject with your partner can be challenging.

I hope this guide can help you communicate your feelings and wishes in an empathetic and understanding way.

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There can be many emotions at play for both of you in talking about couples therapy.

For the partner who invites - the fear of feeling rejected by receiving a “no” and the shame of having a need and the vulnerability in asking for something, can come up.

“I am afraid you will not choose me and us, and that I will feel rejected by it!”

For the partner who is invited, there may be feelings of insecurity and that you're doing something wrong. It can also feel like you're being pressured. These thoughts might occur:

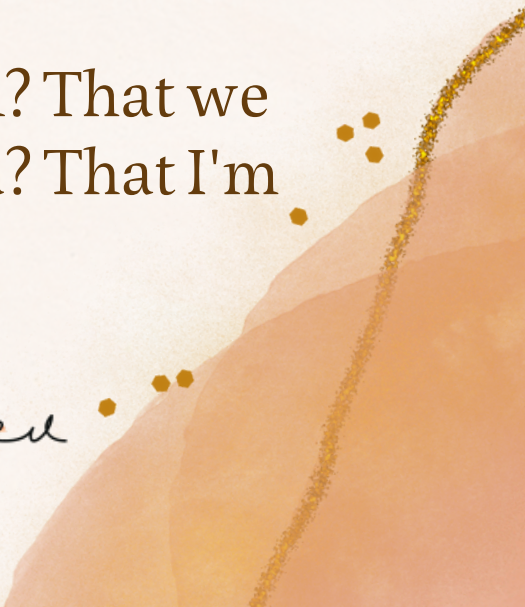
"What will going to therapy mean for our relationship?"



“Does that mean we have a problem? That we might break up and I might lose you? That I'm not good enough for you?”



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The most important purpose of the conversation is to open up the topic of couples therapy and to invite your partner to dialogue.

Here are 7 gentle steps that you can use as inspiration and that can hopefully increase the chances of a better dialog with your partner about couples therapy.

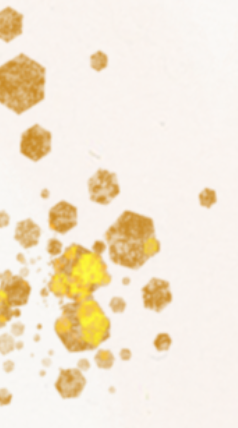

- **Preparation.**

It can be beneficial to take time to reflect on what you want to say to your partner and what is important to you. If you feel anxious about the conversation, then it is a good idea to have some key points written down. That can be helpful with keeping focus and being clear.



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- **Timing is important!**

Find a time and a quiet place where no one can disturb you, especially if you have small children. Avoid having the conversation during morning or evening routines with the children or in stressful situations. It is important that you both have enough time to talk and are mentally present.



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- **Stay in your own shoes.**

This concretely means that you talk about yourself and for yourself by using "I" sentences (personal language).

Often we tend to focus on our partner, which can trigger a defensive reaction. That is, your partner may become defensive and may feel wronged, which may result in you losing contact with each other (and him no longer listening to what you say).

The use of "I" statements can help your partner not feel attacked. For example, you could say, "I feel like we would benefit from talking to a therapist," instead of "You're never home these days, so I want us to go to therapy."

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- **Express yourself as simply and clearly as possible.**

Tell your partner what you want and why it is important for you that your partner participates in therapy.

Use a few short, clear sentences to avoid making the message unclear or confusing. Often we use a lot of words as a way to protect ourselves, especially when strong emotions are involved. Be as honest as possible about your feelings and concerns.

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- **Be curious!**

If your partner reacts with skepticism or doubt, or simply says “no,” be curious instead of argumentative. Ask why the doubt or the “no”!

For example: “I would like to hear more about why you have doubts...”

“I want to understand what is behind your resistance....”

"Can you put in more words why therapy is a no-go for you?"



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- **Listen actively**

When you listen actively, you don't interrupt, you don't persuade, and you don't argue back.

Imagine that both you and your partner are on opposite sides of a bridge. To listen actively, cross the bridge to your partner and stay there for a while.

This means that you do not judge, do not interpret, and deeply accept the fact that the other person has his own experience of the situation, which may be different from yours. It is neither good nor bad, but simply is. Whether the perception is right or wrong, the experience of it is real.



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- **Give time and space**

It may be that your partner needs time to consider what you have talked about. It may also be that you yourself need space to reflect on what has been said in the conversation. Agree, if necessary, when you follow up on it.



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I hope this has been helpful and you can use some of the advice. I also hope that it has given you the courage to talk to your partner.

If you and your partner would like to hear more about how I can help your relationship, you can have a free, non-binding conversation by [clicking here](#):

Book here



Or you can book your [first therapy session here](#):

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