

# Couple Bubble Contract



## The Couple Bubble – A Safe Haven

The couple bubble is a pact between partners in which the quid-pro-quo is to burden one another with the tasks of devotion and caring for the other's safety, security, and well-being. This mutual burden determines the degree of shared gratitude and valuation you both can experience. If you think about it, when the going gets tough, the couple bubble is all you can really count on to hold your relationship together.

This doesn't mean you won't make mistakes along the way or accidentally hurt each other. It doesn't mean you can never make a decision that puts yourself before the relationship, nor that you absolutely never should. These things will happen, no matter what. However, it does mean you will hold each other to your fundamental agreement: **"We come first."**

Then, when either one of you makes a mistake, the other will give a gentle reminder: "Hey, I thought this is what we agreed to do for each other." The transgressing partner can say, "Oh yeah, my bad," and quickly fix the situation.

Creating a couple bubble allows partners to keep each other safe and secure. Together, you and your partner can create and maintain your bubble. You agree to do things for one another that no other person would be willing to do, at least not without getting paid. In fact—and this is important, so listen up—anyone who offers with no strings attached to do what partners must do for each other most definitely wants something from you (e.g., sex, money, commitment). If you're in a committed relationship and someone else seems willing to fill in for your partner, watch out! As the saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch.

So, the couple bubble is something you work on together. But also keep in mind that you are responsible for your end of the deal. You keep it up because you believe in the principle, not merely because your partner is or isn't willing to do the same. It works only when both partners operate on a principled level and not on the level of "You go first."



### Here are some supporting principles to guide you:

1. Devote yourself to your partner's sense of safety and security and not simply to your idea about what that should be. What may make you feel safe and secure may not be what your partner requires from you. Your job is to know what matters to your partner and how to make him or her feel safe and secure.
2. Don't pop the bubble. Because the couple bubble has as its foundation a fundamental, implicit, and absolute sense of safety and security, neither of you should have to worry that the bubble is going to pop. Acting in an ambivalent manner, or taking a stance that is partly in and partly out of the relationship, undermines the security you have created. If this is allowed to persist, one or both of you will be forced into an auditioning position and you will lose all the benefits of the bubble you have so carefully constructed.
3. Make sure the bubble is mutually maintained and honored. Note, this is not codependency. Codependent partners live through or for each other, while ignoring their own needs and wants, thus leading to resentment and other emotional distress. In contrast, when partners form a couple bubble, both agree on the principles and comport themselves accordingly. For example, I can say my partner should be available to me whenever I need, but I must make myself available too, without expecting him or her to go first. Then, if my partner doesn't comply with our agreed-upon principles, we have some talking to do. If either of us continues to renege on our principles, one of us surely will be fired.
4. Plan to use your couple bubble. It provides a safe place in which you and your partner can always ask each other for help, rely on one another, and share your vulnerabilities. It is your primary means of support and protection. For example, whenever you and your partner go into social situations, especially ones involving difficult people, you can make a plan ahead of time that insures you will both be protected by your bubble. Work together so you can figuratively hold hands throughout the event. By holding hands I mean remaining in contact with one another, tracking one another, and being available at a moment's notice. Rely on eye contact, physical contact, whispering, hand signals, smoke signals—whatever!

Conspire together about how you will address difficult people. Perhaps you will literally hold hands or sit next to one another in their presence. We'll further discuss how to protect your couple bubble in upcoming sessions. In the meantime, remember that splitting up to deal with difficult people or situations leaves you vulnerable. Together, you can be truly formidable.

\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to the following:

We agree that even when disagreeing or fighting that we are partners who love each other and will therefore treat each other with respect and kindness.

We agree not to threaten, intimidate, attack, insult or harm each other physically, psychologically or emotionally.

We will maintain civil tones and reasonable volume when having a disagreement or a loaded conversation. We will avoid raised voices, offensive or insulting language, yelling, aggression, or hitting, kicking or throwing objects.

We will focus on the present topic and try to keep from dredging up previous fights, insults or hurt feelings.

We will use "I" statements when addressing how the other person makes us feel.

We will not get into difficult conversations just before bed, just before work, during work hours, in public or around family members.

If one of us needs to leave the situation and cool off we will not use it as leverage or a threat. We will phrase the departure as a need to calm down and we will provide a reasonable time that we can be expected to return.

We agree to ask for help when we need it, voice our concerns when they arise and keep lines of communication open.

If we are unable to resolve our conflicts alone, we will seek help from a therapist, counselor, minister or other support source.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date