

## Chapter Six Advantage Prey

*Listen - Vitamin A  
Growing Things - Shook Twins*

In the early stages of the relationship, if the prey pays attention to her body wisdom and emotions, as well as her intuition, she will have the upper hand. Empaths rely on feelings and intuition, which in the later stages of the narcissistic relationship may become blocked due to confusion. In addition to listening to intuition and emotion, there are also some left-brained, systematic exercises that can be helpful for protecting oneself. I include these later in the chapter.

The narcissistic is a smooth, skilled, and practiced operator, but empaths and co-dependent people are highly skilled at reading energy and picking up on subtle cues in the environment. Co-dependents may have developed this particular skill set from childhood adversity and their bodies usually alert them to potential danger. If empaths don't acknowledge that something is off right away, their minds and bodies don't let go of the unsettled feeling. That feeling sits in the mind and body waiting to be understood. Those who focus on doing the intense work of unpacking old trauma, know how long it lingers in the body and psyche.

**The challenge, particularly if your childhood was dysfunctional, is to not become so accustomed to unhealthy behavior that you ignore or dismiss your intuition and the sensations of distress in your body.** The key to maintaining safety in the initial stages of a narcissistic relationship is to listen to your intuition and any danger messages, and to take them seriously. If you leave immediately, you save yourself from more drama and trauma. Avoid getting caught up in intellectualizing the situation and why it's happening. Instead, ask yourself, "What is my body trying to tell me?" "What's next?" and "What can I do about this?" **Your own sensitivity, often considered a weakness, in this case becomes a strength that allows you to escape.**

### **Right Brain: Intuition, Creativity, & Inner Guidance**

The Oxford dictionary defines intuition as, "The ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning." What if you trusted your intuition and your emotional guidance system without logically analyzing or debunking it? What if the thoughts, feelings, and pictures you receive became guidance you actually listened to, rather than laboriously trying to reason everything out? What if your weaknesses are actually strengths? What if you feel and notice what is in your body, from the heart and ask what it is telling you?

Empaths are often flooded with so much information that it becomes overwhelming. What if you knew how to use that information for your benefit, and learned how to listen to your inner guidance? Your body and energy system are amazingly designed to know what you need in order to develop optimally. For example, your body is constantly working to find a state of homeostasis, or balance. **What if you trusted yourself enough and were willing to change your life a little bit so that you were no longer separate from your heart? If you love yourself and want the best for yourself, you tend to listen and act more upon cues your body and mind are sending you.**

The United States is a left-brain dominant culture in which predation is prevalent. You will probably not learn in school (unless you had a unique experience) how to be in connection to your body, your intuition, and your instincts. Such skills are often regarded as unnecessary for money-making purposes. Being truly embodied does not mean the controlling, goal-driven pursuit of physical perfection. Bodies need love, not merciless comparisons to elite athletes or super models. Here in the US, minds and thoughts rule the show and have dominion over bodies. And thus, the level of illness in this country, both mental and physical, is astounding. It is not surprising that meditation classes have become popular as an antidote to being constantly stuck in frantic thought.

Humans are part of nature and function best in rhythms with the seasons. People are designed to go inside and be quiet to regroup during winter months. Instead, this culture demands a fast paced, year-round, hyper level of activity. People have been conditioned in this culture to be left-brain thinkers, which includes logic, reason, and fact – things they can touch, see, hear and taste. What is missing for many is the wisdom of the right brain knowing, which includes creativity, going with the flow, being vs. doing, and listening to intuition. Intuition is often considered the ‘sixth sense,’ in addition to the five senses learned about in school.

What if instead of dismissing your intuition as irrational, you trusted and appreciated it? What if you tried to understand yourself by meditating, drawing, playing musically, and living more in your body rather than only in your mind? Most people are busy running from place to place, stuck in their thinking minds, on their phones, or on the internet. I was at an ATM recently and I arrived there the same time as another person. I said, “if you are in a rush, you can go ahead of me,” and he replied, “I try to never be in a rush.” How refreshing is that? What if you slowed down and spent time connecting with your body to cultivate a deeper connection to your inner wisdom?

Meditation or practicing presence helps to quiet the mind and differentiate between the busy ‘social ego voice’ and your inner guidance. It allows you to learn how your mind works and to become an observer of your thoughts. Meditation teaches you to not immediately react to everything you think or experience. Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. Bruce Perry often say that “Neurons that fire together, wire together,” meaning that our environments and experiences wire our brains. Do you really want your brain totally influenced by screen time? You are changing your brain by everything you do. Have you considered what you are missing by being glued to the screen and the smartphone? Have you ever stopped to consider that you are actually wiring your brain differently?

Your body and subconscious mind do not have to be unattainable mysteries to you. You have input on what your brain is exposed to and how it works. **You have the opportunity to be in relationship with your body and inner guidance in a way that creates an amazing and vibrant life. One way to do this is to practice loving kindness with yourself.** Slowly, your body and your inner child will begin to trust again. This also includes feeling and safely expressing your emotions, including grief, sorrow, joy, and anger. You need to allow yourself to be real, to feel anger at how you were victimized. You need the opportunity to express yourself honestly, forgive yourself, let go, and move forward. Reconnecting deeply with your body is an important part of the healing process.

**One of the hardest and most courageous acts of healing is facing the fact that you did not protect yourself from the narcissist, and also learning to not continually blame or bash yourself for it. Finding self-forgiveness will help you on the path to healing.** Loving

yourself through the horror of realizing that you did not protect yourself (or your children) and owning that you actually participated in your victimization, allows you to move from victimhood to a place of choice. When you can love your current self and also the past version of yourself, it's a revolutionary act and can lead to profound healing, incredible insights, and life changes.

Note: there are some narcissists out there who are incredibly skillful and have everyone fooled. These are the brilliant ones who know exactly what they're doing and can hurt others on many levels. Most narcissists do a lot of damage, but these ones are highly dangerous. One friend checked in with many people in her community about a man, before she let him into her life. She had children and had been with a narcissist before, and wanted to avoid any more trauma. This man had everyone duped, including professional therapists, who thought he was amazing and only had great things to say about him. These are the kinds of narcissists that are the most toxic. Learning to listen and act upon your own intuition and body instincts is your best defense against narcissists like these.

### **Advantage Prey (The Hunt, The Winds of Change & *The Beginning of Deer in the Headlights*)**

In the earlier stages of the predation cycle, the prey has the advantage. This is where empathic and co-dependent skills come into play, along with intuition. Empaths are born with the ability to 'read rooms' and people's behaviors, and co-dependents acquire similar skills in childhood. Everyone has intuition. It has to be acknowledged, listened to, and acted upon for it to be effective in dodging a narcissist.

In this next section, I outline where and how the prey has the advantage in the earlier stages. As mentioned previously, if boundary violations, **Warning Signs** and **Red Flags**, go unaddressed, then the prey forfeits the advantage. The narcissist has the advantage in the later stages of the predation cycle (later in the Third Stage, and in Stages Four and Five). It's much more difficult after living with long-term abuse, to access your intuition and act upon it.

#### **Advantages:**

- 1. Pay attention to the subtle shifts in his character and in the interpersonal environment.**
- 2. Focus on behavior, not what he tells you.**
- 3. When the narcissist accuses or blames you, pay attention. What words using this occurs?**
- 4. Notice how he thinks. Does he believe you when you tell him you had no intention of hurting him? Does he insist or assume you have bad future intentions?**
- 5. Acknowledge your feelings and intuition. View the big intuitions through different perspectives. How does the intuitive message make you feel? What do you think it means? What is this intuition asking you to do?**
- 6. Pay attention to the types of intuitive messages you receive and the energetic force with which they are delivered to you. Does the message have intensity, is it loud?**

**7. Honor the types of intuitive messages you receive. Pay close attention to messages that come in a different form than you are used to receiving.**

**Advantage 1. Pay attention to subtle shifts in the person's character and in the interpersonal environment.**

When you, the prey, realize that your weaknesses are actually strengths, then you can use them to navigate toxic relationships. If you are an empath and/or co-dependent, you have the skills to observe and notice the subtle shifts in behaviors and the interpersonal environment. That gives you the advantage when narcissists begin to 'slip up,' because they can only pretend for so long.

**Prey Advantage 2. First, focus on his behavior, not what he tells you.**

One of the many valuable things that I learned from a co-worker, is to focus on behavior rather than words. As an empath, I take in a great deal of information. It's challenging to understand the influx of sensory material and it's hard to distinguish my feelings from the other person's. If you then add the complexity of understanding words, feeling emotion, watching behavior, and experiencing energy, it becomes difficult to navigate relationships. This is one reason empaths need more downtime, and may need extra time to process what is occurring in the moment.

Focusing on the other person's behavior can simplify the complexity. I was at a department meeting years ago, and mentioned a new student who was constantly questioning my methods. She had taken only one child development class in high school, and yet, she questioned the dates I wanted assignments completed, and even the actual assignments. She was not excelling, and I kept trying to figure out her motivations. After listening carefully, my co-worker said matter-of-factly, "It's about behavior; don't focus on all of the other details."

Pay attention to how someone is acting, and address the behaviors directly. This was an extremely valuable lesson that I have incorporated into my life and have passed on to others who were caught in the same situation of trying to figure out 'the whys'. When you are an empath, you are taking in so much information that it's hard to know what level to address things on. That's why the behavior recommendation is a valuable framework in order to set and maintain healthy boundaries. **If you simply focus on the behavior, you will be able to notice the Warning Signs and Red Flags. And if you do confront the narcissist about his behavior and how it hurt you, and he lies or blames you, that's a huge Red Flag.**

**Prey Advantage 3. When the narcissist accuses or blames you, pay attention. What words is he using when this occurs?**

After you have focused on his behavior, and have addressed it, the narcissist will either sweet talk you (reverting to initial stage behaviors), deny responsibility for his actions, switch the conversation to another topic, or blame you. When a narcissist criticizes you instead of listening to your feelings, and then accuses you of harming him, pay careful attention to the words he says. One thing you will not hear, or probably ever get from him, is an apology for his behavior.

I said this before only at the beginning does he apologized for his behaviour which tricked you into thinking that he's gonna be do it again. When he goes on the offensive, it may

appear to come out of nowhere, but he is giving you a glimpse of his internal reality. This is why I named **Stage Three** of the predation model, **Deer in the Headlights**. Over and over again I would stand there dumbfounded, as I listened to my partners' bizarre criticisms and tried to find some connection to reality.

The accusations that come out of the narcissist's mouth are sometimes so 'whackadoodle', that your brain short circuits. **THIS IS WHAT TO PAY ATTENTION TO!** The language he uses is a window into how he actually thinks. It may have nothing to do with the current situation, or what you even said. A friend observed one narcissist and I together, and later commented, "It's as if you were having two completely unrelated conversations. He literally never responded to anything you said, and then accused you of something you didn't say. I actually thought he was talking to someone else, but you were the only one there." That comment really helped me recognize just how crazy-making the conversations with him had been.

While you may have compassion for the narcissist's messed-up childhood, if you pay attention to how his brain is wired, you will get an indication of his probable behavior. And if his thoughts and words make little sense, then his behavior will be even more troubling.

One of the cruelest of the narcissist's behaviors is to criticize, accuse, or gaslight you right when you are in your most open, loving state. It causes pain on so many more levels than if you had your defenses up. But if you can rise above the hurt of being accused unfairly, seemingly out of nowhere, then you can use that awareness to get out of the relationship before more damage occurs. **If someone is trashing you when your intentions are kind and you were totally open and loving at the time, that is something to pay very close attention to. This behavior lets you know that they lack empathy (or are choosing not to be empathetic.)** You may be totally tuned into him and loving him, and you assume that he is feeling the same way, but the narcissist either lacks the capacity to do this or chooses not to. Paying attention to what he says as he harshly criticizes you, helps you understand that he will not change. Acknowledge this and buy your ticket to get the hell out of there!

**Prey Advantage 4. Pay attention to how he thinks. Does he believe you when you tell him you had no intention of hurting him? Does he insist or assume you have bad future intentions?**

In Advantage 3, the prey gains awareness by noticing the random and strange things that the narcissist says as a way to recognize a convoluted thinking process. In Advantage 4., you maximize this awareness by noticing what happens when you explain your point of view. Does he believe that you had no intention of hurting him? **If the narcissist is convinced that you will hurt him in the future, even though you have no intentions of doing so, pay attention. This is a VERY clear sign of how he thinks! If he is planning to hurt and manipulate you, he immediately assumes that you will do the same to him.**

Just as it would never occur to you that anybody would intentionally hurt their partner, the narcissist literally cannot imagine that someone would not be intending to do so. You can sense deep down whether or not he believes you. He might say he does initially, but then he may later accuse you of the same thing over and over again. I have rarely had a narcissist believe me after I went to great lengths to prove I wasn't ill intentioned. I can't even come up with an example of when a narcissist I was involved with did believe me, so that's saying something.

If you stay with him after such behavior, he will bash you repeatedly with all kinds of unfounded accusations. He will begin to gather evidence against you. He will convince himself that you are out to get him, because that's how he thinks everyone behaves. Narcissists spend a lot of time planning and plotting, so don't assume that these harebrained accusations came out of nowhere, rather, they have been thoroughly examined and analyzed. **Remember that for narcissists, everyone is a potential adversary. Narcissists are literally incapable of trusting anyone, because they themselves are untrustworthy.**

Unlike lying and denial, which can be more spontaneous and connect to the probable lack of impulse control in their brains, the narcissist's accusations are planned. A friend commented that, "there's never down time in a narcissistic relationship, because the narcissists are constantly stirring the pot to take advantage." In my experience this is true, especially in the later stages of the relationship. You don't have to go looking for drama, it will definitely find you, expressly delivered by your narcissistic partner.

**Advantage 5. Pay attention to your feelings and intuition. How do the messages that you receive make you feel? What do you think they mean, and what does your intuition want you to do?**

Throughout my own healing, I have learned that intuition is often symbolic rather than literal. If you have a vision or an intuitive message, it may not be clear at first. Your job is to sit with it, give it space to grow and let details fill in. In the meantime, checking in with your body and feeling your feelings, is part of the process of honoring your inner knowing. You can even ask yourself questions out loud like, "How do I feel right now? How do I feel around this person? Do I feel safe?"

**Advantage 6. Pay attention to the types of intuitive messages you receive and the energetic force with which they are delivered to you.**

Usually my intuitions are subtle. I might think something was off but wasn't exactly able to pinpoint what it was. If you don't pay attention to your feelings, body, and intuition, the messages may get more forceful and increase in volume. If you get sick often, feel shaky and afraid, or receive messages that shake you up, pay attention. Every time I ignored my intuition, I have regretted it later.

When I was dating Webster, I had a very big intuition while driving over a bridge on my way home from work. It was heavy, energetically loud, and had a booming quality to it (a very strong vibration). It let me know that Webster was unsafe and dangerous to me. This completely freaked me out, but instead of sitting with this information, and letting it continue to emerge, I called him to share what I had intuited. He had been very supportive and understanding up until this point, and during the phone call he was no different. He listened and thanked me for sharing that with him.

What Webster didn't do (why would any predator?) was to ask me open-ended questions or explore my intuition further to help me find more meaning, he was a therapist after all. I had the advantage and yet right there, I handed it over to him on a silver platter. I strongly encourage you to NOT talk to your predator about your intuitions. Instead reflect, journal, draw, or talk to a trusted friend who will listen to you. Either have your friend ask you open-ended questions, or ask yourself, in order to help you explore what your inner guidance is saying.

**Advantage 7. Honor the types of intuitive messages you receive. Pay close attention to messages that come in a different form than you are used to receiving.**

My intuition usually comes in a moment of sudden knowing. It feels calm. Many people get visions or hear messages, feel a rightness or wrongness in their bodies, or know instantly. In other cultures, such intuitive awareness is more accepted. In this culture, we tend to dismiss intuition, often to our detriment. When an intuition comes to you in a different form than what you are used to, pay very close attention. When you are in danger, survival instincts kick in louder and louder until you take some action.

If you have survived being with a narcissist, you most likely have apprehension about getting abused again. It is not uncommon to experience trauma symptoms when you see someone you are attracted to, or if someone starts a conversation with you. The most innocuous encounter might bring up feelings as if you are in danger. This is not a great way to start a new relationship, and is also a state that narcissists can detect easily. I have developed the following exercises for you to do at the beginning of *any* relationship, because this logical framework will help you to feel empowered rather than a victim. You have your own intuition and body wisdom, and you will also have these systems to rely upon if you become confused or stuck.

Empaths and co-dependents often have issues with establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries. The following exercises are to be used before or at the beginning of a new relationship to help create an 'objective' system for you to understand, honor, and create healthy boundaries. We need both logic and intuition, if we are truly going to be able to detect and protect ourselves from a narcissist.

**Left-Brain: Logic and Reason**

The following left-brain exercises are designed to be done at the beginning of the relationship. They can be also used as an objective check in during **Stage Two The Winds of Change** and **Stage Three The Deer in the Headlights** to determine if your partner is really what you want. I recommend not telling the person you are dating about these charts. But if you have already confirmed that your partner is not a narcissist, sharing these exercises may bring more intimacy to the relationship. **Remember, your partner needs to *earn* your trust.** If you tell a potential narcissist that you are tracking behaviors and communication styles, he will definitely use that against you. Please use these exercises wisely and protect yourself.

**Suggestions on How to do These Exercises Successfully:**

1. **Keep these exercises away from the person you are dating.** These are the steps you are taking to protect yourself. If he is a predator, he will expertly weasel his way into this process, complicate it somehow, and charm you out of your knowing. You will then lose any advantage you may have had.
2. **You need to do these before or during the first phase of the relationship** before things begin to change and revisit them periodically during the relationship.
3. **If you believe that you are a narcissist magnet, you might want to get help with these lists from trusted friends or family members who are in healthy relationships.** Consider having them keep a copy for you and decide when you will review them later.
4. **Keep them hidden in a safe place in case your person is a snooper.**
5. **These exercises are designed to keep feelings out of the decision-making process.** If you are with a narcissist and are at the middle to later stages of your

relationship, your brain is likely overwhelmed. You need to create these before you descend into darkness and can't think straight. You can't rely on your brain and your intuition in the mid to later stages, because the narcissist talks you out of your sense of self. You may have lost your connection to yourself, your clear thinking, your body, and your inner guidance system.

6. The examples in the exercises below are my examples. Please spend some time reflecting on what you want and individualize them to your needs and wants. You will need them to refer back to when things get confusing.

### **Exercise One: Create Your Own List of Warning Signs and Red Flags**

Included in my list of **Warning Signs** and **Red Flags**, behaviors that may be witnessed briefly in the Stage One, The Hunt, and behaviors that show up after the prey commits. It's important to keep your list somewhere safe and to review it periodically to see if you have experienced any of these behaviors, and especially in the weeks and months after you commit to them.

Here is my list:

<b>RED FLAGS</b>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lies</li> <li>• Denials</li> <li>• Twisting your words and blaming you</li> <li>• Refusing to take responsibility or be accountable, never apologizing</li> <li>• Gaslighting</li> <li>• Set ups</li> <li>• Aggressions of any kind</li> <li>• Physical violence</li> <li>• Sexual boundary violations</li> <li>• Accusing you of being uncaring and selfish</li> <li>• Your desire to numb around him</li> <li>• Talking you into things you don't want to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary violations in other areas of his life</li> <li>• Boundary violations with you</li> <li>• Estranged from family members</li> <li>• Blames others for his current predicament</li> <li>• Controlling the first sexual encounter</li> <li>• Brief, strange flashes of anger</li> <li>• Your intuitions or dreams about this person</li> <li>• Trying to get you to change who you are and what you do for fun</li> <li>• Your feelings of unease</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Monopolizing your time under the guise of wanting to be with you because you are so amazing</li> <li>• Showing up unexpectedly</li> </ul>

I realize that it's often a tricky balance between protecting yourself and not getting so fixated on negative outcomes that you create even more negativity in your life. I went through a similar thought process of whether or not to have an emergency kit in case of natural disasters. I didn't have an emergency kit together for a long time because I didn't want to connect to a catastrophic event in my mind and potentially create fear around that. Then I realized that my being prepared creates a sense of calm and self-protection. Your body and your inner child need you be the healthy adult and take care of yourself and them. I now have my safety kit not only under my house, but in my car as well. Do yourself a favor and protect yourself.



**Exercise Two: Your Partner’s Healthy Behaviors**

Create a list of what healthy behaviors look and feel like in a respectful and supportive relationship. Again, if you are struggling with creating your list, contact someone you admire who has healthy boundaries, a healthy relationship and get their input. Check the healthy behaviors that are present in the beginning of the relationship and pull your list out again after you have made a small or big commitment, to see which ones you can still check.

It’s important that you write the healthy behaviors in the positive – what you want – instead of writing what you don’t want. If you need to start by writing what you don’t want, then do that and rewrite them into proactive statements later. Writing what you actually want helps clarify your boundaries.

<b>Your Partner’s Healthy Behaviors</b>	<b>The Beginning (The Hunt) Stage One</b>	<b>Post-small or Big Commitment (Winds &amp; Deer) Stage Two &amp; Three</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreements and conflicts are talked about to find a resolution and not a winner.</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Wants to understand your perspective and point of view</li> <li>• Celebrates your successes with you</li> <li>• Talks about his feelings when he has a problem with you.</li> <li>• He follows through on what he says he will do</li> <li>• He supports and listens to you</li> <li>• He does things for you without keeping score</li> <li>• Truly lets things go (does not put them away for a later day to use against you)</li> <li>• Believes you when you tell him your truth</li> <li>• Supports you in having healthy and meaningful connections outside of the relationship</li> <li>• Understands when you need time alone or want to travel without him</li> <li>• Has a rational train of thought and pattern of logic</li> <li>• Acknowledges the great parts of you without criticizing you</li> <li>• He is interested in you and your life and wants the best for you.</li> </ul>		

**Exercise Three: Your Healthy Relationship**

This is a depiction of the person you want to be with, and the kind of relationship you want to have. When I made lists of the ideal mate, it often backfired because I would make exceptions and compromise on what I wanted. When I met Webster, on my list was someone

who had a good relationship with his mother, but I ignored that one. Remember, narcissists pretend at first to be something they are not and we can often miss things. You also might ignore many items on your list due to the person having perceived strengths in other areas. It is essential that you indicate which are “deal breakers” and which are preferences.

These exercises are designed to keep feelings out of the decision-making process.

<b>Your Healthy Relationship</b>	<b>The Beginning (The Hunt) Stage One</b>	<b>Post-Big Commitment (Deer in the Headlights and Cat &amp; Mouse) Stages Three &amp; Four</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Work toward healthy communication</li> <li>• Healthy and respectful boundaries</li> <li>• Problem-solve together for a mutually beneficial solution</li> <li>• Empathy for each other’s feelings and experiences</li> <li>• Support each other in being your best selves</li> <li>• Feels safe</li> <li>• Each of you has healthy friendships and activities outside the relationship</li> <li>• Physical, emotional, sexual safety</li> <li>• Financial responsibility and accountability</li> <li>• You listen to and support each other</li> <li>• Genuinely care about each other’s well-being</li> <li>• Celebrate each other’s successes</li> <li>• Fidelity (if that is something that is important to you)</li> <li>• You each walk your talk and both follow through on what you say you will do.</li> </ul>		

**Exercise Four: Your Needs**

If you suspect you are an empath, highly sensitive person, and/or a co-dependent, I recommend doing some research before you complete this next exercise. It’s often hard to know what you need unless you understand how you think and function at your best. This exercise is crucial to determining whether or not you are with a predator. It will outline for you what healthy boundaries are and whether you are experiencing boundary violations. Your needs, when violated, will become **Warning Signs** or **Red Flags** so that you have a clear idea of whether or not to leave the relationship. Remember that boundary infractions escalate in intensity and frequency. Continually letting him ‘off the hook’ does not protect you at all. Once again this is my list. I invite you to create your own.

<b>Your Needs</b>	<b>The Beginning Stage One</b>	<b>Post-Big Commitment</b>
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	(The Hunt)	Stages Three & Four (Deer in the Headlights & Cat & Mouse)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Transparency</li> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Calm</li> <li>• No yelling</li> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Financial responsibility and accountability</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Emotional, physical, energetic and psychic safety</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Healthy Food</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Laughter</li> <li>• Healthy Communication</li> <li>• Hugs regularly</li> </ul>		

### **Exercise Five: Feelings Collage**

Create a collage of how you want to FEEL in your body and in your relationship. Keep this hidden when your partner is around you. You can use this to check in later in the relationship, to see if you are feeling anywhere close to what you imagined for yourself.

In order to be successful with the advantage strategies above, you need to be connected with yourself enough to listen to your intuition. I used to think that if I was truly and completely in my body that I would lose my connection to my intuition. I was assured by Eliel Fionn that was not the case. When I completely occupy my body, I am more grounded and better able to identify when someone is behaving inappropriately. The more present you are with yourself and the more you listen to what your body, the better able you are to navigate your life. You are able to recognize which feelings are yours, and which are someone else's. Using left-brain logic and reason exercises can aid you in navigating your relationships. And they can help you determine if your relationship is worth staying in or not.

