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Questions and suggestions from the therapist

If we decide to work together and are successful, what would that look like? How might your life be different?

Tell me how you coped with or kept yourself safe during your early years in your family and culture of origin?

Where and how, in your behavior and your body, does this way of keeping safe manifest today?

Would you like to modify or change your early way of staying safe because it no longer helps you be or get what you want?

If you modified your early response, would that make you feel anxious?
(The primitive part of your brain will tell you not to alter any behavior that kept you safe before so you may feel very anxious.)

How will you deal with the anxiety?
(Please be patient with yourself if you are not able to change as fast as you would like)

For homework, please write a detailed description of what you did to stay safe in your family and culture of origin. Then write about how that behavior may be keeping you from creating what you would like to in your life today.

If you are working with a couple, it is very useful to have each person write about their own early way of coping and also their partners way of coping. They can then compare their understanding of themselves and each other to see if they fully understand both their own coping strategies and those of their partner. That helps them recognize when their partners are triggered and to act rather than react.

A warning is in order: Often the coping mechanisms are not fully conscious or even unconscious, so it may take time to unearth them correctly.