Raw Spots

THE OLD BRUISES LOVE PRESSES ON

> *Some places in the heart were tender*
> *long before this love ever touched them.*

Everyone has raw spots, places where old experiences left the emotional skin thin. Being overlooked as a kid. A parent whose love came with conditions. A previous partner's betrayal. Years of not being chosen. When your partner brushes one of these places, even lightly, even by accident, the reaction is instant and bigger than the moment: a flash of rage, a wall of ice, a hurt that seems to come out of nowhere.

Raw spots explain the fights that make no sense on paper, the forgotten phone call that ruins a whole weekend. The current moment carries the full charge of every older moment it resembles. Your partner didn't just miss a call. For a few seconds they became everyone who ever made you feel forgettable.

Knowing each other's raw spots turns them from landmines into places on a map. Not so you can avoid them forever, since life will press on them anyway, but so that when the flare comes you can both recognize it. “We just hit one of your tender spots, didn't we?” Said kindly, that one sentence can turn an explosion into a moment of closeness.

TRADE MAPS

1. On your own, name one raw spot: “I'm especially tender about feeling ___.”
2. Trace where it comes from: “I think it goes back to ___.” Share as much as feels safe.
3. Tell each other what it looks like when the spot gets hit, your specific alarm behavior.
4. Tell each other what actually helps in that moment. The words or the touch that settles it.
5. Treat what you learn as something entrusted to you. Never use it as ammunition.

WHEN IT'S HARD

If your partner names a raw spot that connects to something you did, try not to collapse into guilt or leap into defense. They are not charging you with a crime. They are handing you the instructions. “Thank you. Now I know what that touches” is enough.

TO SIT WITH

Which of your reactions surprises even you with how strong it is? What older story might it carry?

Has your partner ever soothed a raw spot without knowing that is what they were doing?

OUR INTENTION THIS WEEK

Something small you can both actually do this week.

WITH YOU ON THE JOURNEY,

Dr. Mark Gregory Karris