

# Studying Your State of Mind

From Brent Atkinson, Ph.D., Emotional Intelligence and Couples Therapy

"To improve your relationship, you will need to become very familiar with the specific response state patterns that happen inside of you during upsetting situations with your partner. Your best shot at acting differently and more effectively comes when you can recognize when a response state pattern is automatically activated inside of you, and when you develop the ability to shift internal states when needed."

What is the situation/pattern that you are hoping to handle more effectively?

In this situation, what is the internal state or mood that gets triggered in you? What does this state feel like?

What are some specific cues (words, nonverbal gestures, actions, circumstances) that trigger this state of being?

What things do you often think, do, or say when you're in this state?

What is the internal state you are going to practice shifting to?

What is something you can say to yourself that might help you shift?

Once you shift internal states, what kinds of things do you hope to say or do differently?