



# Card Deck #1: Relationship Recovery

## Instructions

This card deck will help you build intimacy and recover from both Under-Pursuing (stalled or distant) and Over-Pursuing (enmeshed or conflicted) styles of relational attachment. Complete the following three steps to get started.

### Step 1: Choose a Timeline to Complete the Questions

Determine how long you want to take to move through the questions. Here are some possibilities:

- Answer two questions each, once or twice a week.
- Answer one question each, every week.
- Answer one question each, every day.
- Prepare by writing out your answers to as many questions as you can.

Alternate sharing your answers. Quality is better than quantity. After you share an answer, resolve all feelings that surface (whether positive or negative) from the current question before moving onto the next question. Attempting another question too quickly might stir up more feelings than you can handle.

### Step 2: Choose Who Will Read the Questions

The questions have the most meaning when you consider them in the context of your relationship. When you are ready to answer a question, decide who will read the question. Try either:

- Your partner reads the question meant for you, then you answer. This is better if you want a more spontaneous experience.
- You read the question meant for you, then you answer. This is helpful if you are preparing your answer ahead of discussing it with your partner.

Either way, consider your answer as if your partner was asking you the question.

### Step 3: Choose a Set of Questions You Will Answer

Depending on your current relational attachment style (Under-Pursuing or Over-Pursuing), determine what questions you will each answer. If you are unsure of your style, see the Frequently Asked Questions for clarification.

The questions are grouped into four categories by suit. Each suit addresses a particular relational style, at a particular intensity. Typically, one partner is pursuing more than the other. However, it is possible for both of you to be under-pursuing (both answer questions from spades or hearts) or both of you to be over-pursuing (both answer questions from diamonds or crosses).

The following table identifies which suits to consider as a starting point:

	<b>Under-Pursuing Style</b>	<b>Over-Pursuing Style</b>
<b>Low to Moderate Intensity</b>	Hearts (red)	Crosses (brown)
<b>Moderate to High Intensity</b>	Spades (black)	Diamonds (blue)



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As the rank of the card increases from ace to king, the questions will generally become more challenging. The more challenging questions are more likely to stir up more intense emotions. This is beneficial if you really want to get to know someone.

Here are the three most popular ways to work through the questions:

1. **Ease Into:** Start with the low intensity suit first and work your way to more intense questions. For example, the Under-Pursuing person could answer in this order:  
Hearts: A through K, then Spades: A through K  
Use this approach if you want to experience a gradual increase in difficulty.
2. **Full Effect:** Start with the more intense suit first and work your way to the less intense questions. For example, the Over-Pursuing person could answer in this order:  
Diamonds: A through K, then Crosses: A through K  
Use this approach if you want to work on your more challenging relationship issues first and mirror your progress as you pursue healthy intimacy.
3. **Random:** Shuffle the cards. Then alternate who draws a card and answers it.  
Use this approach if you want to explore your relationship without becoming especially focused on any theme.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I determine if I am Under-Pursuing or Over-Pursuing?

Under-Pursuing people have many of the following characteristics:

- Move away from their partner
- Are comfortable with distance: prefer to live like a roommate
- Avoid healthy conflict, lack sufficient interest in their partner, and pursue alternative interests
- Do not try hard enough to make the relationship work, at least less hard than their partner
- Use a passive approach by cultivating indifference
- Value their partner less than self or others
- Focus on or expect too much from self and too little from partner or God
- Stay in the relationship because of feeling bound by duty and obligation
- Have given up or are about to give up
- Have betrayed their partner or are about to

Over-Pursuing people have many of the following characteristics:

- Move toward their partner
- Are uncomfortable with distance: prefer to spend a lot of time together, at least more than partner
- Pursue conflict even when unhealthy, lack enough personal interests, and avoid healthy separation
- Try too hard to make the relationship work, at least harder than their partner
- Use an aggressive approach by cultivating entitlement and demanding needs be met
- Value their partner more than self or others



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- Focus on or expect too much from partner and too little from self or God
- Stay in the relationship because of the expectation of receiving a paycheck
- Feel jealous or insecure

2. Can I be Under-Pursuing one week and Over-Pursuing the next?

Yes, in fact, this could be a sign of a healthier relationship. As you learn how to find an optimal balance, you might shift from one side to the other. The goal is to find the optimal amount of pursuing. Many factors make for an ever-changing environment in relationships: aging, life experience, spiritual growth, awareness of needs.

3. Can we benefit from going through the questions more than once?

Yes. Consider answering the same questions at least once a year. Assess if your relationship is changing for the better or worse. If your answers are about the same, consider investing more time in personal growth. If your answers are substantially different (or you don't remember), consider investing more time in fully exploring answers.

## Variations

Newlywed: Answer the questions from the point of view when you were first married.

Story: Read a question, then tell a story that comes to mind.

Memories: Recall 3 memories for every question. Then talk about how they are related.

Time: Answer question from the past, the present, and the future perspective.

Advanced: Roll 3 6-sided dice to select an emotion, a time, and a disposition. Disposition: 1-2=humor, 3-4=sarcastic, 5-6=straight. Time: 1-2=past, 3-4=present, 5-6=future. Emotion: 1=shame, 2=anxiety, 3=lone/numb, 4=sad, 5=powerless, 6=anger. Now, answer the question as it relates to the selected emotion, time, and disposition. For example, with rolls of 3, 2, and 6 answer the question in a *sarcastic* way about a *past* event involving *anger*.