

Angels and Devils Worksheet *“If my devils are to leave, my angels may take flight as well” Rainer Maria Rilka*

Differences are implicit in all relationships. Healthy relationships strike a fine balance between shared values and goals and a willingness to accept or respectfully tolerate individual differences. Where differences can be reconciled or accepted, relationships thrive. Where differences are unresolved or resented, relationships experience conflict or failure. Many relationships fail when small differences in personality or approach are emphasised at the cost of the fundamental reasons for staying together. Relationship resilience therefore requires “Acceptance”. This is sometimes a loaded word. It does not mean that we agree, like or approve of the difference in our partner. It means that we are “willing” to work through individual differences in the service of what really counts. Use this three-part exercise to identify and work through differences. Complete the exercise individually and then exchange worksheets with each other as a basis for discussion. (It may be helpful to do this with the support of a trained CBT relationship therapist).

Part 1 – Identifying Common Ground and Differences: Complete the first part of this worksheet by listing and comparing the things that you value and dislike about your partner. Provide an importance score for each item and then tot up your totals at the end.

What I value about my partner 😊	Importance (0-10)	What I dislike about my partner 😞	Importance (0-10)
	Total		Total

What does this tell me?

Part 2 – Working Through Differences: Having identified the key differences in part one of this exercise, the next step is to decide whether you are willing to accept, change or tolerate these differences in the service of staying together in a healthy and mutually respectful relationship. List each difference indicating:

“**A**” = Acceptance – A willingness to embrace the difference without judgement or criticism.

“**C**” = Change – a commitment to find a mutually acceptable compromise that involves change on both sides.

“**T**” = Tolerate – commitment to hold the problem gently without agreement or resentment about your differences.

What is the problem?	A – C – T	How will I do this?

Part 3 – Unresolvable Differences: If there are fundamental differences “Deal Breakers” that cannot be resolved in part one and two of this exercise, use part three to list the issues below for further discussion. Do not use this section as leverage or to score points. Only identify items in part three that are unresolvable using the “A”, “C”, “T” formula outlined above. Use a separate sheet if necessary. These items may require the support of a CBT relationship therapist or mediation:

What is the unresolvable problem?	How will I put this on hold until help is available?