

PAOC
Psychobiological Approach to Couple Therapy®

**The “Deal Breaker”:
Detection and Intervention**

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INSTITUT

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The Deal Breaker

PURPOSE

- Assessment
 - To uncover deal-breaking issues
- Intervention
 - To amplify and maintaining pressure on the couple to make resolution of deal-breaking issues a top priority
 - To confront attempts to avoid, defer, or otherwise kick the can down the road

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The Deal Breaker

PRINCIPLES

- When a deal breaker is revealed, make that the top therapeutic focus
- Do not allow either partner to avoid the issue
- Do not conspire to kick the can down the road
- Watch your countertransference
- Allow the couple to find their own creative solution
- Allow enough time for multiple, frequent sessions to see the couple through the crisis
- Allow the couple to break up over the deal-breaking issue
- Continue to see them if they do decide to break up:
 - State how important it is for them to get help with breaking up
 - See them right away

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The Deal Breaker

INSTRUCTIONS

- Uncover deal breakers
 - Use corollary questions
- Amplify deal breakers
 - Cross-question
 - Cross-comment
- Hold the couple to the deal-breaking situation
- Support each partner's position
 - Clarify what is true for each
 - Argue each partner's position for him or her
- Regulate the couple through the process
 - Go down the middle
 - Tense and relax

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Deal Breaker Process

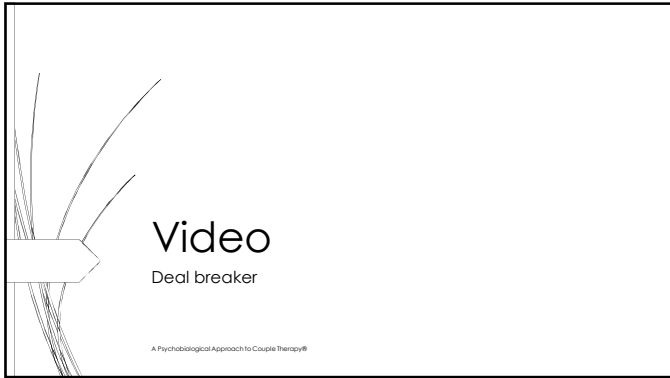
- Deal breakers can be obvious or hidden
- If you discover a possible deal breaker, amplify it to see if it's real
- A deal breaker, hidden, implied, or explicit, is like a radiologist finding a spot on someone's lung
 - It cannot be ignored, especially on YOUR watch!
- Partners will avoid, dismiss, or defer deal breakers in order to escape loss
- The couple therapist, when focusing on a deal breaker, may be afraid of the consequences of such focus, and as such may avoid seeing it through
- We must trust the couple to decide for themselves if a deal breaker should lead to the end of the relationship

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Deal Breaker Process

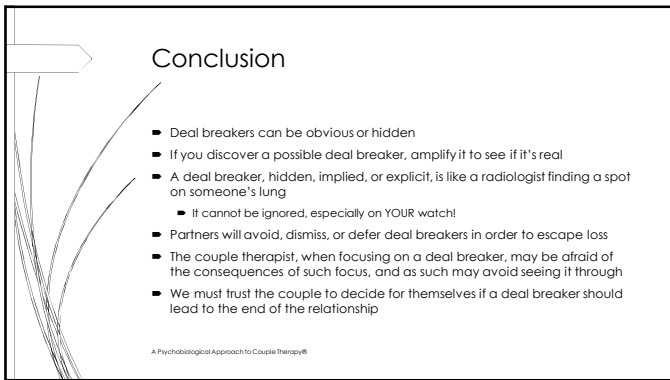
- Partners will never fully collaborate on a deal breaker unless forced to do so
- At some point in the deal breaking process, the therapist will be unable to see a solution
- When the couple breaks up in session, convince them to return the next day
 - The time in between often leads to creative solutions by one or both partners
- The relationship isn't over until it's over – and that can take a long time
- Make certain that whatever the partners agree can't come back to bite them
 - A deal breaker MUST be taken off the table for good, never to return

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Video
Deal breaker

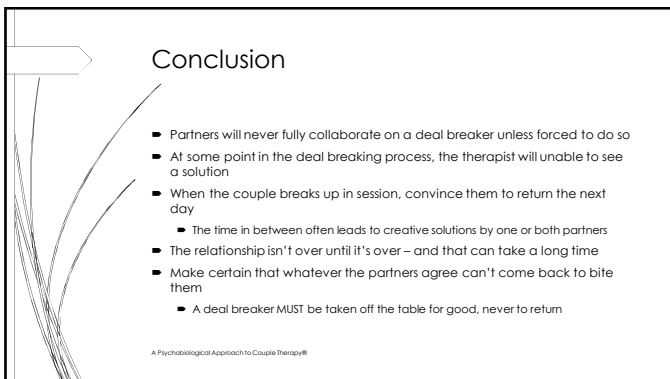
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Conclusion

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Have fun with your couples!

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