

Softened Startup

- (1) Test your ability to soften a harsh startup. For each item below supply a soften alternative.
1. When your mother-in-law visits tonight, you plan to tell her how much it hurts you when she criticizes your parenting skills. You want your partner, who is defensive when it comes to mom to back you up.
Harsh startup: *I can't stand it when your mother comes over.*
Soften startup:
 2. You wish that your partner would cook dinner tomorrow night or take you out to dinner.
Harsh startup: You never take me anywhere. *I sick of doing all the cooking.*
Soften startup:
 3. You think that your partner spends too much time with other people instead of you when you go to parties. Tonight, you want your partner to stick by you.
Harsh startup: I just know that tonight you're gonna be flirting shamelessly again at the party.
Soften startup:
 4. You want your partner to ask for a raise.
Harsh startup: *You're too wimpy to get a raise for your own family.*
Soften startup:

Gottman, John and Nan Silver: **The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide From the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert** (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999).