

Repair vs. Self-Abandonment

The Difference Is Not the Behavior. It's the Function.

Repair and self-abandonment can look similar on the surface. Both may involve apologizing, changing, waiting, or making sacrifices. The difference is what the behavior is organized around.

◆ The McInnis Method

REALITY	<i>Something happened that requires accountability.</i>
THREAT	<i>What the conflict might mean about you, the relationship, or what happens if you stop trying to repair it feels dangerous.</i>
PROTECTION	<i>You begin organizing your life around preventing the other person's reactions instead of responding to reality.</i>
ACTION	<i>Take responsibility for what is yours without taking responsibility for what is not.</i>

Repair Looks Like

- Taking responsibility for your actions.
- Making meaningful changes.
- Remaining emotionally present without surrendering yourself.
- Allowing another person's feelings without accepting endless punishment.

Self-Abandonment Looks Like

- Organizing your life around avoiding someone else's reactions.
- Accepting shifting standards to prove your goodness.
- Losing your voice, limits, or judgment to preserve connection.
- Mistaking endless suffering for accountability.

◆ Reality Check

Ask yourself: Am I restoring trust, or trying to purchase it?

If repair requires giving up your voice, limits, or judgment, something other than accountability is happening.

Bottom Line

Repair owns what is yours. Self-abandonment takes responsibility for what is not.