

Emotional Validation

Cheat Sheet

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR
PARTNER FEEL SEEN AND HEARD



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4 Steps to Emotionally Validating Statements

Using Empathy Could Be the Key to More Loving Conversation

How do we use emotionally validating Statements?

When building, nurturing, or repairing your relationship, one of the tools in your toolkit is empathy. But what is empathy, and how can we use it to develop the emotional intimacy we want?

Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of another, to understand their point of view, and why they feel the way they do. Most emotionally validating statements are empathetic statements.

Theresa Wiseman outlines four qualities to help us empathize in her 4 Attributes of Empathy. It might not come naturally to some, but with effort and practice, it's possible.

1. Put yourself in your partner's shoes
2. Do not judge
3. Consider your partner's feelings
4. Communicate your understanding

In Their Shoes

The first thing to do is put yourself in your partner's shoes—really get in their shoes and attempt to see the world the way they view it (not your opinion of their views). Here are some straightforward examples from couples in conflict:

Dennis totally loses it when Alice leaves towels on the floor.

Hiran hates that Arya fishes for compliments all the time.

Stacy is hurt when Bill says he needs alone time.

To get into their shoes, apply your knowledge of your partner. It's not about how you would think, but how they think.

To Dennis, wet towels on the floor feels disrespectful.

Arya is feeling vulnerable and needs to build up from an area of strength.

For Bill, walking away is how he keeps from saying something hurtful. He is trying to repair, not make things worse.

Judge Not

The second key quality is to be non-judgmental, and this is hard. Rather than considering our view about how someone should or shouldn't do something, simply seek to understand the view of the other without opining about it.

It doesn't matter if it's not how you would feel in the same circumstances. In fact, that's rather the point.

Towels on the floor may not matter to you.

Maybe you'd prefer to offer Arya compliments in your own time, without being prompted.

And maybe Bill shouldn't run away from an argument.

But when you're reaching out in empathy, what really matters is how your partner feels in that moment.

Consider Their Feelings

You may have to guess about how they would be feeling, but give it a shot. You may surprise yourself. And if you can't imagine what they're feeling, ask.

Communicate Your Understanding

Lastly, communicating understanding to our partner—that there is some part of their view or position that makes sense to us, that we can validate.

This does not mean agreement or condoning something, it simply means you see where they are coming from.

Consider, a time in the past someone disagreed with you and you didn't feel heard by them. Were you more or less likely to compromise?

Consider a second scenario. Think of a time in the past someone disagreed with you, but heard your side first and even validated some points. Were you more or less likely to compromise?

Most people are more able to hear different views, work towards compromise, or calm their emotions when their position is heard and validated.

For example:

"I get that you feel like I don't respect you. That's frustrating."

"I know things have been hard, and you don't really feel like yourself. I understand."

"You walked away to keep things from escalating. I get that. Let's talk when you're ready, and we'll make sure you're comfortable as we go."

When we can share our stories and both partners practice empathy, we can come up with joint solutions from this place of strength. This is another way that couples can actively work towards change together. So when you start to feel that disconnect, don't forget about emotionally validating statements to communicate empathy.

Emotional Validation Cheat Sheet

- That must be hard.
- Of course you feel upset.
- I can understand why you wouldn't feel... Naturally, it would be hard given...
- I hear you.
- It makes sense you feel...
- Keep going, I'm here.
- I would feel that way too.
- I see your point.
- You sound really upset by this.
- You're so passionate about this.
- Your emotions make sense. It's okay to feel that way.
- In this situation, most people would feel the same way.
- No, you aren't overreacting. It's normal to feel like this given what happened.

How to Use This Information

These powerful emotionally validating statements can transform disconnected conversations into conversations where you both feel seen and understood.

3 Key Steps To Implementing This Material In Your Relationship

- 1. Practice putting yourself in your partner's shoes.**
- 2. Communicate your understanding of your partner's emotions using emotionally validating statements.**
- 3. Repeat.**

Hi, I'm Apexa Kerai, MSc., Cli.Psych. Psychologist & Couples Therapist



AK Counseling and my work(this guide) is dedicated to sharing relationship resources, tools, and step-by-step strategies that will help you build the relationship you dream of.

You don't have to be 100% committed. Resources are designed so that by taking micro actions you will have the blueprint to be seen, listen to, understood, and connected to your partner,

Many couples are stressed about communication and the growing distance between them. At AK Counseling & Therapy we provide frameworks with actionable strategies to help couples create connection and clear communication. When couples use the frameworks, they discover a loving relationship where they both feel heard.

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