

Validating Statements

There are different ways you can communicate validation. As long as you show the other person that you recognize and understand their emotions, you're validating:

- "I can see that you are very (upset, sad, frightened, scared, etc.)."
- "Here's what I'm hearing you say (fact checking)."
- "That must have been hard for you."
- "I can see you are making an effort."
- "I can see how hard you are working."
- "I can see this is important to you."
- "What a frustrating experience to go through!"
- "That's got to be so (frustrating, difficult, upsetting, etc.) for you."
- "It makes sense you would be so upset about that. "
- "Tell me more." (shows interest)
- "I would have felt the same way. I would be (upset, frustrated, scared) too!" (Self-disclosure)
- "No wonder you're feeling confused."
- "That is so sad."
- "You have every right to feel sad; that was a major disappointment!"
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Invalidating Statements

The following are some examples of invalidating responses to avoid:

- “I hated it when that happened to me.” (Making it about you)
- “Oh, you think you have it bad...”
- “You should feel grateful...”
- “It could be worse!”
- “What’s the big deal?”
- “What you really should do is...” (Unsolicited advice)
- “Just ignore him.”
- “I’m going to talk to him and...” (Trying to fix their problem)
- “Well, life’s not fair...”
- “You’ll be fine.”
- “If you had only...”
- “You’re too sensitive.”
- “You’re so dramatic.”
- “I bet she was just...” (Rationalizing the other person’s behavior)
- “Don’t be such a baby/wimp.”
- “You shouldn’t think that way.”
- “You always get yourself into these situations.”
- “Why can’t you be like your sister?”
- “At least it’s not...”
- “Just try to see the good side and tough it out.”
- “Here we go again, cry over nothing.”
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Probing Questions

- Is this a good time to talk?
- Would you like to talk about it?
- Can I ask some questions?
- Tell me more. What are you feeling?
- Help me to understand. What exactly happened?
- What am I not getting?
- Would you like my opinion or do you just want me to listen?
- How can I help you out of this pain?
- Is there anything I can do to help you?

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