BUILDING TRUST & CONNECTION

A PHRASE-SWAP CARD FOR TWO

When “Calm Down” Makes It Worse



Fill this in when you have some breathing room. Each person can name a well-meant response that makes it harder to talk and one they’d prefer in that moment.

Hear the difference

“I know you’re trying to help. When I hear ‘calm down,’ I feel like I have to defend being upset. Could you let me finish and then tell me what you heard?”

One of us

A phrase I find hard to hear, and what tends to happen for me:

The other of us

A phrase I find hard to hear, and what tends to happen for me:

One thing I’d welcome hearing instead

One thing my partner would welcome hearing instead

Try one exchange

Ask, “Would ‘I’m listening, take your time’ feel better, or is there another way you’d say it?” Let the person receiving the words choose.

For a more in-depth look at how to build trust and connection in your relationship, explore Building Trust and Connection, my 10-week, self-paced course.

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