

Helpful Phrases to Use with Your Partner

Like many people in a relationship, you may find yourself at a “loss of words” with your partner. The following phrases are offered as suggestions to help you effectively express your thoughts and feelings. These phrases may feel un-natural to you at first. They represent a different way of speaking with your partner that may be unfamiliar to you. Over time these phrases will come more easily and you will learn to modify them to better suit your individual style and personality.

“I Feel...”

1. I'm getting scared
2. Please say that more gently
3. Did I do something to upset you?
4. That hurt my feelings (be specific)
5. That felt like an insult (be specific)
6. I'm feeling sad
7. I feel blamed. Can you rephrase that?
8. I'm feeling unappreciated
9. I feel defensive. Can you rephrase that?
10. Please don't lecture me
11. I don't feel that you understand me right now
12. I'm starting to feel emotionally flooded
13. I feel criticized. Can you rephrase that?
14. I'm getting worried

“I Need to Calm Down”

1. Can we take a break?
2. I need things to be calmer right now
3. I need your support right now
4. Please listen to me right now and try to understand
5. Tell me you love me
6. Can I take that back?
7. Please be gentler with me
8. Please help me calm down
9. Please be quiet and listen to me
10. This is important to me. Please listen
11. I need to finish what I was saying
12. I'm starting to feel emotionally flooded

“Sorry”

1. My reactions were too extreme. Sorry
2. I really blew that one
3. Let me try again
4. I want to be gentler with you right now, and I don't know how
5. Tell me what you hear me saying
6. I can see my part in all this
7. How can I make things better?
8. Let's try that over again
9. What you are saying is...
10. Let me start again in a softer way
11. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

Getting to “Yes”

1. You're starting to convince me
2. I agree with part of what you're saying
3. Let's compromise here
4. Let's find our common ground
5. I never thought of things that way
6. This problem is not very serious in the big picture
7. I think your point of view makes sense
8. Let's agree to include both our views in the solution
9. I might be wrong here
10. One thing I admire about you is...
11. I see what you're talking about

“I need a Break”

1. Please, let's stop for awhile
2. Let's take a break
3. Give me a moment, I'll be back
4. I'm feeling flooded
5. Please stop
6. Let's start all over again
7. Hang in there. Don't withdraw
8. I would like to change the topic