

## EMPATHY

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Acknowledging that another person's experience matters by taking responsibility and sitting with discomfort without placing it on the other person.

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### WHAT WAS THE ONE THING I SAID OR DID THAT HURT YOU THE MOST?

**Often in arguments**, one person will go on and on about what the other person did or didn't do; mostly, this will come from a perspective of what they believe (their interpretation) versus what the other person actually did (behavioral facts).

**When we ask someone what hurt them**, we are showing them that we care about their experience. We are holding a place of healthy self-esteem and establishing our own boundaries. The person answering is only sharing "one" thing, which needs to be a behavior or something the person said (not what they think that hurt the other person).

The listener responds by acknowledging that it was true (empathy) and validating that they can see why that felt hurtful. We hold the 70% rule: if it is 70% true, we own it and accept it.

**If it is completely false**, most likely this is their opinion and not fact. Hold your boundaries up, then come back with curiosity and ask again: "What was the one thing I said or did, a behavior, that hurt you the most?" (You got this! But it is their turn to voice themselves, and not yours. Why is this important? Because you love them.)

**Then switch turns.** Have the other person ask, "What was the one thing I said or did that hurt you the most?"

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### WHAT IS MY OBJECTIVE? HOW DO I WANT TO BE SEEN OR HEARD IN THIS CONVERSATION?

The one thing I want you  
to know the most is...

**When we are arguing or triggered,** our thoughts, feelings, and needs can go all over the place. If you want to feel heard and move forward, you need to focus on one thing only. Take a moment to think about what you really want the other person to hear or know that is most important to you. What is it that you want to solve or feel understood about?

**When we have so many things to share,** we have no idea which one thing another person will pick up and run with. When they don't pick the one thing that that is most important to ourselves, we often feel like the other person isn't listening or we make up the belief that they don't care. It is our responsibility to keep it simple and focused on one objective for each conversation. We can't control what the other person will hear or what will stand out the most from what we have said.

**After you share your objective, switch turns.** Have the other person share what is the most important thing that they want you to know.

**You may find that you don't have a single hurt or one objective.** It is okay to allow the other person to have their own complete turn regardless of your answer. We don't have to make all conversations or arguments a tit for tat situation. Additionally, you can always come back to another topic another time. Be patient.