

How to Validate Her Feelings When It Doesn't Come Naturally – Playbook

Use this right before or during a real conversation, when you want to validate what she's feeling instead of jumping to fix it.

Before You Start

Remind yourself of one thing: she isn't handing you a problem to solve. She's handing you a feeling to understand. Your job for the next few minutes is to show her you get it, not to make it go away.

Take one breath before you respond. If you notice yourself already forming a solution, that's your cue to slow down and start with the formula instead.

You don't need the perfect words. A short, honest line beats a polished one that sounds rehearsed. If you stumble, keep going. Stumbling and trying is still worth more to her than staying silent until you get it right.

Set the fix aside for now, even if you're sure you're right about the solution. You can come back to it later, once she knows you heard the feeling first. Most of the time, once she feels heard, she's the one who brings the problem-solving back up.

The Formula: See, Name, Normalize

See: Say what you notice, plainly. "You've gone quiet since that call." Keep this to one sentence and let it be observable, not interpreted.

Name: Name the feeling, tentatively. "Seems like that left you frustrated." A soft guess invites correction, so she can tell you the real feeling if you missed it.

Normalize: Say why the feeling makes sense. "Of course you're frustrated, she does that every time." This step is what separates validation from a polite acknowledgment.

Say all three, out loud, before you offer anything else. It takes less than twenty seconds and it changes the whole conversation.

Reading the Moment

This works best when she's bringing you a feeling, whether it's about her day, about you, or about something old resurfacing. It's not needed for every logistics conversation or every quick check-in.

Watch for the signs: her voice tightens, she repeats herself, she says "you don't get it," or she goes quiet after trying to explain something. Those are your cue to run the formula before you do anything else.

If she opens with a straightforward question or a simple request, you don't need the full sequence. Save it for moments that carry weight, or it starts to feel like a routine instead of a real response.

Scripts By Communication Style

If you tend to keep the peace and avoid friction: Your habit is to smooth things over fast, before the feeling has even been named, usually because conflict of any size makes you uneasy. Try: "Sounds like today was rough. I want to hear about it before we figure anything out." Alt phrasing: "That sounds like a lot. Tell me more before we talk solutions."

If you tend to hear feedback as an attack: Your habit is to explain your side the moment she brings something up, since a complaint feels like a verdict against you. Try: "You're right, I can see why that felt dismissive. That must have stung." Alt phrasing: "I hear you. That would have frustrated me too."

If you tend to get intense or talk fast under stress: Your habit is to move quickly toward a fix once you've named the feeling, because sitting in it feels like wasted time. Try, at half your normal pace: "I can hear how frustrated you are. I want to get this right, so tell me more." Alt phrasing: "Slow down with me for a second. Help me understand what today felt like."

If you tend to go quiet or need time to find words: Your habit is to say nothing until you have the right words ready, which she often reads as you checking out entirely. Try: "I can tell you're upset, and I want to say more. I just need a minute to find the words." Alt phrasing: "I don't have the right words yet, but I'm not going anywhere."

What Not to Say

Instead of: "I get that you're upset, but you're overreacting." Adding a "but" cancels the validation before she's even finished hearing it.

Instead of: "Here's what you should do." A solution offered before the feeling is named tells her you heard the problem, not her.

Instead of: repeating her exact words back in a flat tone. Mirroring without warmth reads as a technique, not care, and she will notice the difference.

Instead of: going quiet and hoping it passes. Silence reads as absence to her, even when you're still processing what she said.

If It Goes Sideways

If she says you sound scripted or accuses you of using a technique, drop it out loud. Say: "That came out wrong, let me just say it straight," then say what you think she's feeling in your own words.

If she keeps escalating after you validate, stay with the steps a second time instead of switching to a fix out of frustration. Some feelings need more than one pass before they cool.

If you genuinely don't know what she's feeling, say so instead of guessing wildly. "I'm not sure exactly what you're feeling right now, but I can see something's wrong, and I want to understand it" still counts as using the See step, even without a clean Name.

If the conversation stalls completely, a short pause helps more than pushing through. "I want to keep talking about this. Can we pick it back up in a few minutes?" keeps the door open without forcing a resolution neither of you is ready for.

Quick Recap

- See it, name it, normalize it, in that order, before you say anything else.
- A tentative guess at her feeling works better than a confident one.
- If your first try feels scripted, drop it and get plain instead of defending the technique.
- Hold the fix. It can wait until after she feels heard, and it usually works better once she does.
- Feeling heard is what opens the door back to closeness. Skipping it is what keeps it shut.