



Validation Skills

ATTEND

Pay attention, listen, and comment without judgment

Nodding while the other person is speaking.

COPY

Mimic their words or behavior

"Wow, your mother in-law actually said that you are 'exhausting to be around?!'"

CONTEXTUALIZE

Identify the chain of cause and effect that contributed to someone's reaction

"I understand why you're hurt given all you've done to take care of her this year."

EQUALIZE

Affirm that their reaction is normal or to be expected

"If I were in your shoes, I'd never have been able to get through the rest of that lunch with her."

PROPOSE

Guess their thoughts, feelings, wishes, etc. based on what they shared

"You must have felt totally cornered."

TAKE ACTION

Directly intervene with resources, support, or help.

"That Gottman book you asked to borrow actually has a chapter on MILs. I'll drop it off tonight."

EMOTE

Express genuine emotion; break character

Shake head in disbelief and drop jaw in response.

DISCLOSE

Share common experiences

"My MIL and I didn't get along well at first. Nothing as bad as this, but I remember feeling weirded out that I could dislike the mother of someone I loved so much."