Validation

Showing someone that their feelings make sense. It works on yourself too.

Validation means letting another person know that their feelings and reactions are understandable. It is not the same as agreeing, approving or giving in. You can validate how someone feels and still hold a different view.

Why it matters

People who feel dismissed tend to push harder. People who feel understood tend to settle. Validation is often the quickest way to calm a row.

How to do it

1. **Pay attention.** Put the phone down. Look at them.
2. **Reflect back.** "So you were waiting for an hour and nobody told you."
3. **Name what is unsaid.** "I would guess that felt pretty disrespectful."
4. **Make sense of it.** "Given what happened last time, of course you were worried."
5. **Say it is normal, when it is.** "Anyone would be upset by that."
6. **Be real.** Treat them as an equal, not as fragile.

Invalidating

- "You are overreacting."
- "It is not that bad."
- "You should not feel like that."
- "At least..."
- Jumping in with advice

Validating

- "That sounds really hard."
- "I can see why you would feel that."
- "That makes sense to me."
- "Tell me more."
- "What do you need right now?"

Validating yourself

Many of us are quick to tell ourselves we are being stupid or dramatic. Try the same steps inwards: "I feel hurt. Given what happened, that makes sense. Anyone might."

Someone I could practise validating this week, and how

Something I am feeling that I could validate in myself

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