

The Validation Method for Empathetic Communication

Validation helps people feel seen, heard, and understood. It defuses defensiveness and builds trust.

Effective Validation Has 2 Parts

1. **Identify the specific emotion.**
2. **Offer justification for why that emotion makes sense.**

Example: “It’s so frustrating they cited us for that. You worked so hard preparing.”

The Validation Method (Step-by-Step)

1. Listen Empathically

Be present. Avoid interrupting or offering solutions right away.

2. Validate the Emotion

Name the feeling and normalize it.

3. Offer Advice, Encouragement, or Solutions (If Appropriate)

Only after validating first.

4. Validate Again

Reinforce understanding before closing.

Why It Works

- Reduces defensiveness
- Builds psychological safety
- Helps people feel respected
- Improves problem solving

Adapted from “**I Hear You**” by Michael Sorensen.