



## The 6 Keys of Healthy Engagement After a Disappointment or Hurt Feelings

When someone important to you has made a mistake or misbehaved, and your feelings are hurt, try taking the following steps to repair the rift between you.

### **KEY 1: Remember the Purpose of this Particular Connection.**

Consider the purpose of this particular relationship.

*For example, If the breakdown was with your new boyfriend, the intention you might have is to use what's happening to deepen understanding in service to growing connection between you.*

Understanding the context of this particular relationship will inform your communication goals, as you make efforts to repair the breakdown of trust between you.

*The purpose of this relationship is: \_\_\_\_\_.*

## **KEY 2: Create Safety Before Engaging the Breakdown.**

Studies show that the first 3 minutes of a conflict conversation will determine whether or not that conversation goes well and can be used to help deepen your connection, or if the conversation will tend to go badly and undermine the overall health of the relationship.

Safety can be created by first validating the value of the relationship before engaging the conflict, and by sharing your intention for the conversation.

*For example, “Look, I really love you and I’m committed to our relationship. I want to talk about what just happened to make sure our relationship stays healthy.”*

*My intention for bringing this up with you directly is: \_\_\_\_\_.*

## **KEY 3: Know the Difference Between a Complaint and a Criticism.**

A complaint might be, “This is the third time this week that you’re late and I’m upset to be waiting again.”

A criticism would be “Wow! Late again? Seriously? You are so damned inconsiderate.”

The latter is crossing into criticism/character assassination.

To protect your relationships, you want to get good at making complaints, which is when you are able to focus on the actual *behavior* that disturbs you, rather than making it about someone’s flawed character.

*My upset (complaint) is: \_\_\_\_\_.*

## **KEY 4: Invite Collaborative Inquiry Rather Than Present Your Conclusions.**

Stick with the facts as you understand them, and share them with the person you are upset with *before coming to a conclusion about that their choices and behavior means.*

Allow the conversation to be a *collaborative inquiry*, where there is room for input and a different recollection of the “facts.”

Notice if you have a tendency to jump to conclusions when you are unhappy with someone’s behavior. He doesn’t call when he said he would, and you conclude he doesn’t respect or value you. She doesn’t offer to pick up the bill even though you paid last time and you conclude she’s a taker, not a giver.

Noticing your automatic conclusions requires you are self-aware enough to be able to notice, “Something just happened and I’m making it mean \_\_\_\_\_. Is that really true? It feels true but can I really know for sure it is?”

Assume you need the other person’s input before you actually know what meaning to make of what’s happened.

*For example, “How do you see this situation? Do you see things the same way that I’m seeing them? If not, then how do you see this situation?”*

## **KEY 5: Do Your Best to Be a Good Friend.**

Great relationships require the extension of understanding, empathy and friendship. We want to remember that the other person is a very different creature than we are. They have their own needs, perspectives, feelings, needs, agenda and desires that are likely very different than yours.

Try to find your way into someone else’s world to understand what their choices and actions might mean to them. Then communicate in ways that let them know you see and hear them—that you have managed to find your way into their world.

Then share about yourself to give them a chance to find their way into yours as well. In this way, the understanding between you has the chance to deepen, as does the friendship.

*For example, “Wow, that’s a new way of looking at things for me. While I don’t know that I agree, I do get where you’re coming from. Thanks for sharing your perspective.”*

## **KEY 6: Ask For and Be Willing to Make an Amends.**

The restoration of wholeness between ourselves and others happens when three things happen. When an apology is offered, an acknowledgement of impact is given, and an amends is offered.

Apologies alone are insufficient to repair a relationship after a serious breach of trust. Instead, we must find a way to validate the impact of the choices made and actions taken on the other person, and then do our best to make an amends.

An amends might be made by a simple gesture to do something to make it up to the person, like cook dinner for them,, or be the one to drive next time. It could perhaps be a heartfelt promise to do things differently from now on. Or, if an amends can’t be made directly to the person who has been hurt, a commitment can be made to not hurt others in this same way.

In knowing what you now know about the other person, can you be the bigger person and acknowledge the impact of your behavior on them? Is there an amends you can now offer?

*For example, “I’m sorry. I can see how hurtful that was. What can I do better next time?”*

Or is there a way you can share the impact of their behavior on you without making them wrong, or shaming them? Is there an amends you can request from them to help restore a sense of wholeness to the relationship?

*For example, “I would be really grateful if you could just hear how hurt I was by that, even though you didn’t mean it. And I’d be grateful if you can assure me that you will try to do better next time.”*

**Please note:**

This handout has been adapted from Katherine’s **C.L.E.A.N. Love Workshop** — a companion to her ***Healthy Habits of the Happily Attached*** course. This powerful program is designed to help you not only create but also sustain the kind of love that truly lasts.

If this material resonates with you, you’re warmly invited to dive deeper by exploring the full course, where Katherine offers step-by-step guidance, practices, and tools to expand your capacity for happy, healthy love.

You can find out more information here:

- [Healthy Habits of the Happily Attached](#)
- [C.L.E.A.N Love](#)