

TRUST AND COMPASSION

From Protection to Connection

SAME HUMAN NEEDS

Safety • Understanding • Belonging

WHEN WE FEEL THREATENED,

fear kicks in and we put up protective armor. It can keep us safe in the short term, but it often leads to hurting behavior.

A KINDER CYCLE BUILDS A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP

WHEN WE PAUSE AND GET CURIOUS,

we can choose a different path. Vulnerability and compassion help us rebuild trust and feel connected again.



STRESS LEVEL

How activated are you right now?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

OPEN

Good for connection and problem solving.

CAREFUL

Take extra care and be intentional.

REGULATE FIRST

Pause and calm your body.

STOP AND TAKE A TIMEOUT

Too activated to talk well.

TURNING DEFENSE INTO CONNECTION

SAME TEAM. HARD CONVERSATIONS. A KINDER WAY.

CONFLICT
CAN BRING YOU
CLOSER



1

CHECK YOUR LEVEL



If either person
is 7 or higher,
regulate first.

2

LOWER THE ARMOR



Open hands.
Soften shoulders.
Take one breath.

3

NAME THE TENDER TRUTH



When ____
happened, I felt ____.
What I needed
was ____.

4

LISTEN FOR THE NEED



What is the hurt,
fear, or unmet need
beneath the
reaction?

5

RESPOND WITH CARE



I hear you.
I understand why
that hurt.
I want to handle
this with care.

6

BUILD TRUST THROUGH FOLLOW THROUGH



Trust grows
through safe,
repeated,
consistent action.

SPEAKER

BE HONEST. BE CLEAR. BE KIND.



1 WHAT HAPPENED?

2 WHAT DID I FEEL?

3 WHAT DID I NEED?

LISTENER

BE CURIOUS. SEEK TO UNDERSTAND.



1 WHAT DID I HEAR?

2 WHAT NEED IS
UNDERNEATH?

3 HOW CAN I SHOW
CARE?

TIMEOUT OR ABANDONMENT?

SAME DISTANCE. VERY DIFFERENT INTENT.

TIMEOUT

- ✓ Names the stress level
- ✓ Gives a return time
- ✓ Regulates without punishing
- ✓ Comes back

ABANDONMENT

- ✗ Walks away without a plan
- ✗ Uses silence as punishment
- ✗ Threatens to leave
- ✗ Does not return to the issue



COMPASSION DOES NOT MEAN AGREEMENT.

IT MEANS I CAN CARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WHILE WE WORK TOWARD UNDERSTANDING.