

The Acknowledgement Blueprint

Overview

Throughout this process, pay attention to and take care of any unmet needs of your own that come up or get triggered so they do not affect your responses

1 - Nonverbal acknowledgement

- Use simple, nonverbal actions while they are speaking) that show that you are listening, engaged and curious, without interrupting them

2 - Demonstrate you are on the same team

- Use a simple phrase that shows that you are on the same team as them (i.e. that you are not being defensive, and to reduce defensiveness in them)
- This frames your response so they know how you are approaching this situation

3 - Demonstrate that you have heard what they have said

- (Think: how do they know I have HEARD them?)
- Rephrase and summarize what you have understood and allow them to clarify (without defensiveness) if you have misunderstood anything

4 - Demonstrate that you understand why they think, believe or feel this way

- (Think: how do they know I UNDERSTAND their point of view?)
- Explain why their perspective makes sense to you OR
- Explain that you understand why they think or feel that way

5 - *Provide validation (only if you agree with their perspective)

- (Think: how do they know I AGREE with their perspective)
- This is essential if you agree with them: Validate what they have said, making it clear that you believe that what they are saying is VALID
- Use phrases that show that you agree with their perspective

6- *Take additional action if you can

- (Think: How can I SHOW them I've heard, understood and agree with them?)
- Ask yourself "Is there an action necessary or possible based on this acknowledgement that would help the acknowledgment move from intellectual, or verbal, to active and embodied?"
- If so, take this action, to make the acknowledgement more meaningful

***Optional Steps**



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The Essential Four Steps to an Effective Acknowledgement

It depends on the depth and importance of what is being shared as to which of these are necessary, but to provide an effective acknowledgement of anything that is meaningful or important, all of these first four steps must be included

Throughout this process, pay attention to and take care of any unmet needs of your own that come up or get triggered so they do not affect your responses

1 - Nonverbal acknowledgement

- Use simple, nonverbal actions while they are speaking) that show that you are listening, engaged and curious, without interrupting them
 - Nodding your head
 - Facing, looking and leaning towards them, rather than away
 - Placing a hand on their hand, arm, leg, back, etc., to connect more

2 - **Demonstrate you are on the same team**

- Use a simple phrase that shows that you are on the same team as them (i.e. that you are not being defensive, and to reduce defensiveness in them), for example:
 - I hear you
 - I think I understand what you're saying
 - I agree with you
 - Thank you for sharing this with me
 - That makes sense
- This phrase frames your response so they know how you are approaching this situation



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Remember: Throughout this process, pay attention to and take care of any unmet needs of your own that come up or get triggered so they do not affect your responses

3 - Demonstrate that you have heard what they have said

- **(Think: how do they know I have HEARD them?)**
- Rephrase and summarize what you have understood
- Do not change key words too much as this will change the meaning and give the appearance that you have not heard what they have said
- Check in that you have understood what they have said
- Allow them to clarify (without becoming defensive) if you have misunderstood anything
- Rephrase and summarize the clarification to demonstrate that you now understand what they have said

4 - Demonstrate that you understand why they think, believe or feel this way

- **(Think: how do they know I UNDERSTAND their point of view?)**
- Explain why their perspective makes sense to you OR
- Explain that you understand why they think or feel that way
- You can do this by explaining the logical steps:
 - I can see that when this happened, it led to that thought or feeling, which led to that conclusion
- You can do this by sharing a similar example from your own life that relates to this situation
 - If you do this, ensure you bring it back to THEM and THEIR perspective
 - For example: I can understand why you feel that way, I had a situation where this happened, and that caused me to feel that way, so it makes sense why you would feel that way in this situation



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The Optional Final Two Steps in an Effective Acknowledgement

Remember: Throughout this process, pay attention to and take care of any unmet needs of your own that come up or get triggered so they do not affect your responses

5 - ***Provide validation (only if you agree with their perspective)**

- **(Think: how do they know I AGREE with their perspective)**
- This is essential if you agree with them: Validate what they have said, making it clear that you believe that what they are saying is VALID
- Use phrases that show that you agree with their perspective, for example:
 - That is completely valid
 - I would feel the same way
 - Of course you would think or feel that way given what has happened
 - That is completely understandable etc.

6- ***Take additional action if you can**

- **(Think: How can I SHOW them I've heard, understood and agree with them?)**
- Ask yourself "Is there an action necessary or possible based on this acknowledgement that would help the acknowledgment move from intellectual, or simply verbal, to active and embodied?"
 - Remember this needs to be Selffirst (i.e. not at our detriment)
- If so, take this action, to make the acknowledgement more meaningful
- This takes an acknowledgement from just being a conversation to something that is actively changing your choices, behaviors or relationship for the better

***Remember these are optional steps, only to be included if they are appropriate, possible and relevant to this situation**

