What is Validation and Why It is Important

What is a Validating Response?

Identifying and communicating your understanding in a CLEAR way

- Communicate what you understand about the situation
- Legitimize the "facts" (including the facts of the other's experiences and responses)
- Explain your own feelings after expressing understanding
- Acknowledge the situation, the other's opinions, feelings, etc.
- Respect your own, and his/her emotions, desires, reactions and goals

Why Are Validating Responses Important?

Validation:

- Is the core of communication (along with accurate disclosure)
- Soothers and reduces negative emotional arousal
- Builds trust and slows negative reactivity
- Conveys the legitimacy of a person's experience (emotions, thoughts, actions, desires, etc.)
- Maintains fairness and decreases angry responses
- Enhances self-respect
- Is the key to getting through "rough" spots in your relationship
- Makes problem-solving, closeness & other kinds of support possible

Invalidation results in painful negative emotion in the other person and is toxic to relationships.

What Should I validate?

- Feelings or Emotions
- Legitimacy in wanting something
- Beliefs, opinions, or thoughts about something
- True Values about something
- How difficult a task is
- How hard a person is trying to accomplish something
- Things that a person does that are effective for him/herself
- Things a person does for another