

Communication, Validation, & Empathy = Friendship

The definition of validation is: "The act, process or instance of confirming or corroborating the meaningfulness and relevance of what another person is thinking or feeling." The basic idea is that even if we disagree with what another person thinks or is feeling, we can value them by adhering to the four rules of validation which are:

- 1. Listen, by giving your full attention*
- 2. Listen to the emotions being expressed*
- 3. Listen to the needs being expressed*
- 4. Understand, by putting yourself in the other person's shoes as best you can*

Validation often has the net effect of allowing the person being validated to feel safe sharing with you, and therefore more willing to both share and to seek advice or counsel. Too often we rush in with great advice in an attempt to solve the problem and "make everything all better." Even if intentions are honorable, and our advice sound, it may well fall on deaf ears, with problems going unresolved.

VALIDATING PHRASES

- * Oh * That's got to be hard*
- * Wow! * That's a tough spot to be in*
- * That must be frustrating * Tell me more*
- * That's a real bummer * I'll bet that's hard*
- * I'm sorry that happened * What a good idea*
- * What a challenge * I think I might have felt the same way*

VALIDATING QUESTIONS

- * How did you feel about that? * What did you do?*
- * What would you like to do? * Are there other options?*
- * What do you think might work? * How did you stand that?*
- * How did it happen? * What's wrong?*
- * What was that like? * What does that mean?*
- * Where did it happen? * What would you like me to do?*

Remember that to be validating we must make the statement or ask the question and then wait (Listen, Listen, Listen, & Understand).