

How to Repair with someone who is available

This document is designed to help you repair a “hurt” or a relationship conflict, snafoo, mistake, mess, etc. For this, you need a willing partner. It’s written in the perspective of YOU being the person who made the mistake, hurtful behavior, etc.

1. Get very clear about what happened on your side. Get outside help to help you see your blindspots. You cannot see the whole picture alone. You are not trustworthy. Chances are you have had a blindspot, so find at least 3 people to challenge you on your side of the story. A true friend and mentor will challenge you here.

Do not move on to step 2, until you complete step one. UNLESS they are open to co-figuring out what happened together.

2. Pick a safe meeting time and place with no distractions.
3. Let them know ahead of time that you plan on cleaning up a mess you made and you’d like their full attention.
4. First, before you do anything else, DO NOT lead with an apology.
5. Summarize your understanding objectively (not subjectively)
6. Get their world. What must it have been like to be in their shoes...
7. Validate their experience. “It makes sense that you feel/felt that way b/c XYZ (might mention step 9 here, but only if it’s “clean”).
8. Ask them if you got it right. Did I get it right? “Is that what it felt like to you?”

Don’t move to the next step until you feel confident that you are understanding them. They will give you some green light. Then, move on to step 9.

9. Begin to OWN where you went off the rails, got triggered, hooked, checked out, blamed, got aggressive, whatever.
10. Do NOT justify or defend until you have their permission to go there. “Are you open to hearing more about WHY I behaved in that way?”

For example, when I had an emotional affair with my GF, I was angry and hurt. But I didn’t get to that until I got outside help. At first, I was almost indignant that my wife was so impacted. And, I justified it was “just flirting.” “what’s the big deal?”

But because I care and am self-aware, something felt off, so I went and got some feedback from a seasoned therapist and my men's group. In other words, I took a deeper look.

Instead try something like "Hey honey, why did I "act out" like that?" My best guess is that I'm angry at you. I'm also feeling both engulfed in our relationship, and also unseen. Acting out like this is my lame way of getting space and getting noticed. It's also a lame way of letting you know that I'm hurting over here."

11. Speak very matter of fact. If you "escalate" or get triggered in the process, you might not be ready to clean this up. Be careful of letting their reactions to you sharing, trigger you back into something else.
12. Ask them if this all makes sense to them. "I know what I did/said wasn't right or it was hurtful to you, and, does it make more sense now, that I behaved this way, given what I shared?"
13. Commit (without making childish promises) that you will do your best to behave in a way that honors them and you.

Example: "Moving forward, I want you to know that my behavior is not okay with me either." or "I'm committed to behaving (name exact behavior) differently in the future."

14. Ask them if there's anything else *they* need to feel complete, to close the loop.
15. Share with them if there's anything else *you* need from them to feel complete.

Final comments

Notice if the trust has been strengthened or not. Sometimes this level of repair re-builds trust. Other times, the person might prefer to "hang on" to the hurt and hold it against you. That's okay. You are doing your best to clean it up in the best way possible.

If you can't do this on your own, pay good money to hire someone with crazy skills to walk you through this with them.

[Hire me](#) for a premium intensive where we spend as long as it takes to get it to zero.