



3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

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Discover the secret of respectful, essential, and proven tools that will improve every relationship in your life, with yourself, a partner, family, or at work. This is very dear to my heart, and has helped me a lot in my own life.

Yes! We all love to be heard! Some of us speak our truths easily, without fear. But others struggle, get emotional, angry or freeze in moments that are stressful or uncomfortable.

If you would like to boost your communication style, please read through this carefully. And definitely practice it! If you have a question, please do not hesitate to reach out. I know first hand HOW important it is to communicate from the heart, and to share what you'd like to share, fearlessly and compassionately, knowing you will be heard.



Gustav Vigeland, The Vigeland Installation, Frogner Park, Norway

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

1. Don't be angry AT, but angry THAT.

If you recognize that you are fearful of conflict, you have already made the first step to dealing with it more effectively. Don't beat yourself up, that never helps. What DOES help, is understanding what happens in your brain. Why do you feel these feelings?

It all begins with your brain, anyway. Your brain orchestrates your feelings and emotions. But, you feel them in your body. You don't feel them in your head. You might feel the fear in your heart. Your hands might sweat or even tremble, your throat may narrow, and suddenly your voice cracks, or worse, you start to stutter. You can't find the right words, it feels like your brain is frozen, and of course, afterward, you blame yourself. "Why couldn't I calm down and say what was really bothering me clearly and coherently?"

Another way some people deal with fear of conflict is – walking away! It can be very effective for surviving the moment, but it's not really effective for resolving a conflict. Or, for getting your needs met.

So, WHY is it, that you have all those stress responses?



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Let me ask you this.

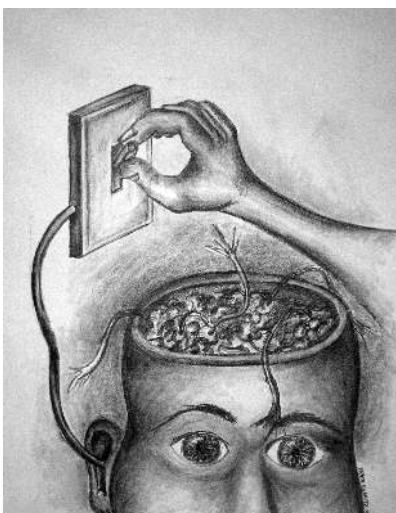
As a young child of 2 or 3 years old, did you ever experience situations where someone that you loved very much (like your parent or an older sibling) got very angry **at** you?

Or, did you witness a terrible fight between your parents, where they were both screaming, or even throwing things around or at each other. That is a very scary experience for a child.

Or, maybe you observed a very intense anger outburst. For instance, your dad was furious **at** your mom.

In your little child's brain, witnessing the anger directed at you or directed at you or someone you love so much, -who is also your protector- is very overwhelming emotionally.

The emotional circuit of ANGER, -(we have 7 circuits in the brain,) gets entangled with the FEAR circuit. That means neurons that are wired together, fire together. The "fire" is the response you feel.



So, the strength of the intensity determines how strongly you are affected by that experience. The result is, that in the future, when you experience someone exhibiting a strong angry behavior, at you or anyone, you automatically feel a FEAR response.

Now,.. no one likes to be in fear. So, we try to avoid people who have angry outbursts.

Here is a great tip.

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If you feel angry, about something or about someone – it doesn't matter-, know, that you have the right to feel and acknowledge the anger. It is often an indicator that can change important things for you.

You could be angry because your deep needs for respect, love, or appreciation are not being validated, or worse, they are being violated. That's upsetting!

So, what can you do?

First, you look inwardly and acknowledge your unmet needs and the reasons why you are angry or upset.

Next, and here it comes, remember that you are NOT angry AT, but angry THAT.

You need to focus and direct your anger on the topic, the problem, your unmet need.

If you are angry THAT, you don't direct it to the person, but onto the facts.

This way, if you are a parent, and angry, you won't frighten your child. Your child then has the opportunity to learn compassion for your upset or pain no matter what ignited your anger.

The result is, that you do not hurt anyone while you express what's upsetting you.



If you are angry at your partner, he or she will have an easier time listening to you, but not only that, they won't feel attacked and they will be much more likely to listen to you and actually hear what you are saying.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

Recently, I discovered someone stealing some of my ideas and written materials. Somebody I never expected to behave that way. I had a strong response of shock and anger when I realized what had happened.

And yes, I got very mad and said with a loud voice: I AM FURIOUS!!!!

That was the only thing I said a few times.

Right away a door opened and one of my sons came out: "Mom what is going on, what happened???" He was there, ready to listen, and compassionately receive what I had to share.

If I would have gone ranting, cursing, and yelling at the person who caused my anger, (because that's what people often do when they are upset, ...) his door would have probably opened only **after** I would have calmed down.

Being angry is totally ok, even though there are some so-called 'enlightened' people that think anger is wrong.

No.

Anger is a sign that something is **not right** for you, that important needs are not being met, or worse, being violated. And you need to acknowledge that!

Being angry THAT instead of angry AT, is so much healthier for you, and others around you.

Try it!

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2. You did.....what???!!!

Does your living room sometimes convert into a courtroom? What I mean by that is that when you are upset at your partner, your children, or anyone else, you express your frustration by attacking whomever you believe surely is responsible for how you feel now. But then when you express yourself, you see that your pain or frustration hasn't been heard - at all!

Usually, when you share your problem in a way that appears as an attack, the other person will immediately defend him/herself. That will make you even more upset because you think you are so right and entitled to be understood! I feel for you. It's not an easy place to be!



Here is the bad news and also some good news that I have for you.

If you start explaining your problem with **“You did....and you said.... and you didn’t”** no one will EVER hear your pain. They will hear BLAME, SHAME, and GUILT. They will ONLY hear that they are wrong. Not only are those feelings of the lowest vibrational energy, they are also just counterproductive. Here are some brief insights I hope that will be helpful to you.

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Shame, Blame and Guilt are intended to TRICK people into thinking that we can make others feel a certain way in order to control them. It's the way most of us have been raised, it's intimidating but not necessarily a successful strategy for being heard or resolving conflicts in a peaceful way.

Blame, shame and guilt are only used to manipulate others into certain behavior.

We use BLAME - SHAME - GUILD and mix stimulus and cause.

So, when you are angry or upset, you are likely to have "blame-thinking" going on in your head. Inside of blame-thinking, you have emotions, and these are caused by unmet needs.

When you can get conscious of your "blame" statement you can begin to explore your feelings and use these feelings to get clear about which of your needs are going unmet.

At the core of all problems are needs that are **not** being fulfilled.



Deep down, we are actually upset because of unmet needs. That often includes needs such as the need for *respect, validation, intimacy, connection, enrichment of life*, to name a few, (there is a longer list below). Mothers, or mothering people, can be so good at identifying their babies' needs, but at the same time they can get upset if their partner doesn't guess their needs adequately. It's just impossible to expect that to happen, so it's time to learn HOW to get your needs met.

Another important reality is - NO ONE can fulfill your needs 24/7 .

No one can be made responsible for meeting our needs, other than ourselves!

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One more problem that you may recognize is that most of us have been trained to discount our needs. We've been called selfish for "wanting" and "needy" when we voiced our deepest yearnings. Judgments and criticism are also used as tools to put us in our place.

But the fact is that everyone has needs, all the time. Every human being needs respect, nourishment, harmony, self-expression, and love.

So, if you agree with this all, I invite you to take an example that was a frustrating experience for you, and search in the next table for needs that you can identify as not being met in that experience.

Write down your example in one or two sentences:



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Needs

<p><i>Physical Wellbeing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">airfoodwatershelterprotection (emotional)safetymovementrestsleeptouchsexual expressionhealthcomfortwarmth	<p><i>Harmony</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">peacetranquilityrelaxationbeautyordereasepredictabilityfamiliaritystabilitybalancecompletionwholeness	<p><i>Power</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">self-esteemconfidencedignityinner powerempowermentcompetenceeffectiveness	<p><i>Connection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">collaborationreciprocitycommunicationcompanydurabilitycontinuityto belongto giveto receiveto see / to be seento hear / to be heardto understandto be understood	<p><i>Meaning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to learngrowthto contributeto enrich lifehopecreativityinspirationpurposeclarityawarenessliberationtransformationto matterparticipateto be presentsimplicity	<p><i>Love</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">compassioncareattentionacceptanceappreciationreassuranceaffectiontrustinvolvementrespectsupportnearnessintimacytendernesssoftnesssensitivityfriendliness
 <p>CarlaVanWalsum.com</p>	<p><i>Autonomy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">choicefreedomtimespaceindependence	<p><i>Pleasure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to celebrateto mournflowhumorlaughtervitalitychallengestimulation	<p><i>Liveliness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to discoveradventurepassionspontaneityplay	<p><i>Authenticity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">honestyintegritytransparencyopennessself-expression	

Write down all the needs you can find that were not met:

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3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

Now, imagine you are in a conflictual situation. You are very upset. You have identified what needs are not met. Then, what? Absolutely avoid ANY sentence that begins with; “You....” because that is accusatory and puts people on the defensive.

Start the sentence with: **“I think...I see... I thought....I was....”** and share your point of view as your **personal** observation.

For instance: your partner shows up an hour later, while you had prepared a romantic dinner, and you are upset s/he is much later than you expected him/her. Your response could be (while honoring your needs for respect, clarity, validation etc.): “I thought we agreed to meet at 7 pm?”

I was waiting for an hour and felt disappointed because I worked hard to get everything ready and prepared in time”.

You give yourself some empathy for the disappointment.

The Art of Self-Compassion



Then you stop talking. See what happens. You shared your feelings and thoughts. But you didn't blame. In this way you open the door for reflection and opportunity for at least a dialogue. You could be met with empathy, which is very healing. People make mistakes, that's one thing, and how to deal with that is another thing.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

We leave all judgments out of the equation, and stay with the simple facts. That will keep the peace and you'll get your needs met more regularly.

Here is an overview of a respectful communication process.



Tip 3. The Elephant and the Rider

This topic is helpful if you want to share something that is important to you, that might be a totally different viewpoint than the beliefs your “opponent” has. If you have experienced earlier in your life that when you said something, people laughed, got mad, even punished you, sharing your truth might give you today the following responses:

- You freeze (your brain actually)
- You side with the other person in order to avoid a conflict
- You get nervous and start to stumble
- You just want to keep it to yourself
- You are overly concerned about what others think of you, consciously or subconsciously.
- You avoid certain conversations all together

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to say whatever you want without feeling the slightest fear?
I hope you say “Yes!”

Let's go for the topic of politics. I find it easy myself to have those discussions because I'm interested to hear other people's visions, and I can always learn something.

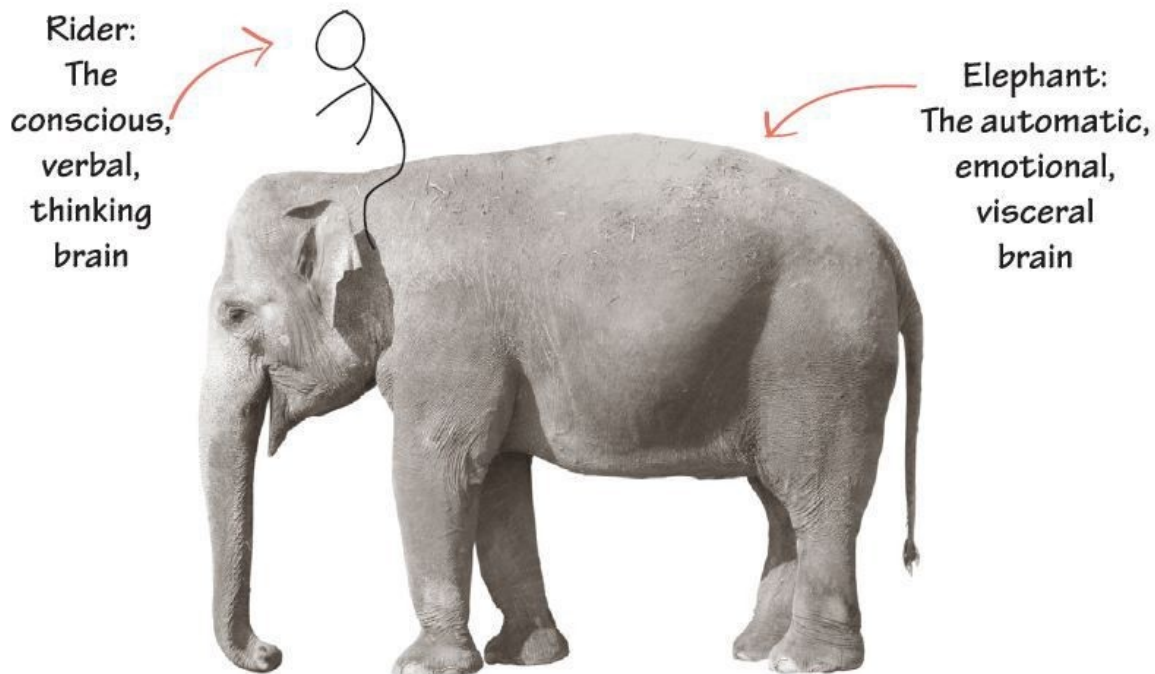
However... remarks can be so strongly fired that my sense of fairness gets fired up.

You might have noticed that emotions go up high when moral values are involved. Moral values are dear to us (at least they should). Although we like to be balanced between head and heart- mind and emotions- we have strong gut feelings about what is right or wrong.

We often don't know where our beliefs actually come from. However, we then can respond in an emotional way, and reason is not really involved.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

Look at it as if the mind is divided in two parts, like a RIDER (controlled processes) on an elephant (automatic processes).



The Rider serves the Elephant. So if the rider, reasoning, doesn't convince the elephant, intuition, where to go, no change in judgment will happen.

Differently said: "Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning later".

So, if you'd like to *change* someone's mind about a moral or a political issue, you will need to talk to the elephant first.

If you want people to believe or accept something that violates their intuitions, they will find all kind of arguments to doubt your statements or conclusions. They most likely always succeed to stay in their own points of view. Be aware that social and political judgments heavily depend on intuitive flashes.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

Reasoning though, can take us almost to any conclusion.

So if we ask ourselves: "Can I believe this?" when we really might want to believe something, the answer might become : "Yes".

But, If I ask myself: "Should I believe this?", when I actually don't feel like changing my opinion, I most likely will say "No, I won't".

Also, we tend to deploy our reasoning skills to support the group we are part of. We are committed to our team. Thus, in moral and political matters we are often groupish, rather than selfish.

It is rather interesting how political viewpoints can be inherited. A strong example is former Yugoslavia.

In the Netherlands (where I am from) were many Yugoslavian families living since the 60'ies, also new waves of immigrants came when the war of 1991 started, the violence erupted in Yugoslavia following the breakup of the Sovjet Union .

Etnical cleansings were happening all over and divided the population into 3 parts , the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. However, during the existence of former Yugoslavia, many people "intermarried". It seemed like ethnic differences were over bridged. When in 1991 the war between those groups started, and divided Yugoslavia again into 6 countries, many "Yugoslavian" couples, also those living in the Netherlands, divorced. The polarities had been buried for many years, but rose their heads when the division was openly brought out.

It shows again how loyal people can be to the groups they belong to, a loyalty that surpassed the relationship with their marital partner.

You probably want to know now what you can do to step comfortably into a conversation or discussion.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

As I said before, you need to talk to their elephant first.

You focus on the intuitions to elicit new intuitions, not rationales.

- **You absolutely avoid direct confrontations.**
- **Find common ground where you can meet each other.**

The following story is a great example where emotions/intuitions can go so high without coming near.

A college student (A) is demonstrating with a banner that shows "Israel = Apartheid State." Another student, (B) trained in the techniques I mention here, passes by.

B: "Hey, how are you? You are demonstrating against Apartheid?"

A: "Yes! I think it's terrible!"

B: "So, you don't like Apartheid, I don't like it either! I think it's terrible what happened in South Africa."

A: "Yes, for sure. But this happens in Israel".

B: "Can you explain to me what Apartheid means to you?"

A: "Well,... uh... that there are two different laws in one country. That one ethnic group has more rights than another ethnic group. That they are discriminated against."

B: "Well, then I have good news for you. Israel has one law system, and in that law everyone is considered equal and has the same rights." (They find common ground.)

A: "Really? I cannot believe that!"

B: "Have you been in Israel?"

A: "No, actually not."

B: "Well, I have. I actually lived there for a while. And I can guarantee you that there is not such a thing as apartheid. Are there problems? For sure. But that is a different story. There is actually an Arab in the Supreme Court which would be impossible in an Apartheid State."

They continued to chat. And the banner was taken down.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

You see in this (complex and loaded) example, btw it truly happened like that, how the “common ground” (siding in not liking apartheid) made it possible to listen, AND change a perspective.

More tips to being heard successfully:

- Start friendly
- Smile
- Be a good listener
- NEVER ever say: “You are wrong!” or anything like that.
- Be aware that you come from a respectful place, ready to HEAR the other person, or that you don’t care more about making a point.

Create a common ground, where you slowly and friendly can introduce another opinion.



Here is a quote from Henry Ford that holds much truth:

“If there is any one secret of success it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from their perspective”.

I'd like to add that a basic respectful attitude is very helpful as well.

3 Easy Tips to Be Heard Effectively

There is much more to say about this topic but I hope that these tips

1. Instead of being angry AT, be angry THAT!
2. You did say... WHAT?
3. The Elephant and the Rider.

will help you to feel better in conflict situations.

I offer training in Nonviolent Communication, an effective self-development tool with processes, helpful to connect in any relationship instead of unnecessary alienating from each other in discussions.

If you have questions, please shoot me an email at: Carla@CarlaVanWalsum.com or book a free clarity call!

I'd like to talk to you!

Click here to [book a free clarity call](#)

