

## Attunement to Another

Attunement is to show interest in another's interior world. It's to care about how they are feeling. To be curious about how they've been impacted by an experience. It's to understand what something they just experienced really means to them. It is to put yourself in another's shoes and feel some of what they are feeling. You either imagine how it might feel for them if you were in their current situation. Or you remember a time you felt a similar feeling and feel that a little bit.

Attunement is to genuinely care about someone, their wellbeing and enjoyment of life separate from you, and your impact on them. It's not just asking about their day as a courtesy, but truly listening and caring about their response. It's the ability to meet someone at a point in their journey with understanding. All the while keeping in mind that we can never really know what it's like to be someone else. We can just come closer.

Attunement is about connecting to the good stuff too! To really see how another thrives. To see, know, feel and delight in what lights them up, their energy, their warmth. Honoring where they get energy from, how their heart opens, when their brain is making connection, problem-solving and getting creative. What makes them squeal. Delighting in their delight even when it's not what does it for you. Wanting them to thrive.

When we are attuned to, it soothes our distress, helps us connect to ourselves, and is the glue for relating and belonging with others. Emotional attunement is basic nourishment. If someone attunes to us while we are distressed, our nervous system gets co-regulated with. This can restore our life force and energy. Yes you can make due without emotional attunement, and it even builds helpful grit. But you miss vital nutrients if you go too long without. With too much disconnection you end up using compensatory strategies to get by in the short term, but they cost you in the long term. The costs in the long-term are more internal distress, less connection with your core self, and less true intimate connection with others.

When we attune with others, we allow our own internal state to shift, to come to resonate with the inner world of another. This resonance is at the heart of the important sense of "feeling felt" that emerges in close relationships. We need attunement to feel secure, close and connected.

Brene Brown says: "Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard and valued. When they can give and receive without judgement."

Some steps for attuning to another are...

- Attention: Attention is to put your focus on someone else. It's to really listen to what another is saying and to read their facial expressions, body language, and voice tone. You don't need to agree with their view. You just want to attend to how they are experiencing things. Generate or tap into your interest and curiosity for this other being. What it's like for them.
- Cognitive Understanding: Put self in their shoes. See the moment through their lens. There is no need to agree with them or excuse their missteps. You just want to understand their perspective and allow their experience. Some questions to think through are:
  - What are they facing right now in their day that feels emotionally difficult for them?
  - What are they pre-occupied with?

- What do they feel overwhelmed by?
- What is important to them right now?
- What does the current situation they are in mean to them?
- Emotional Empathy: To let their perspective and feelings in so you know them or feel them just a bit. Imagine their situation happening to you, or remember a time something similar happening and feel just 20% of what they might be feeling for a few seconds. You don't need to agree with them, or completely know or feel what they feel. You just need to see and understand how their current reality affects them. If they have too much on their plate and they feel alone and overwhelmed, remember a time you felt alone and overwhelmed and feel 20% of that.
- Self-care: Ask yourself: "What do I need right now so I can stay connected to their experience?" Don't go into self-blame about what they are feeling. Be nurturing and compassionate with your own self. If you are distressed by what they are distressed by, be kind to yourself. Don't allow yourself to get swallowed in their feeling. In order to be able to linger in another's experience for a bit, one needs to be in touch with their own emotional landscape. When one can't linger in their own hurts, delights, disappointments and yearnings, and it's harder to make contact with another's. So do what you need to do to care for your own reaction. Develop your own emotion regulation and self-compassion tools. And if you have any self-blame about causing some of their distress – learn how to not get swallowed in your self-blame. Correspondingly, if you find yourself blaming them, learn what is the vulnerability for you under the blame. Often why we are not attuning to others enough, is that we have not developed our own muscle or self-compassion for our own internal world.
- Affection: This is to care a bit. It is to feel warmth, care, curiosity and respect for another. To see the best in them in the midst of their pain. To accept them and see their strengths. There is a best self in this person that is likely occluded when they are struggling. Open your heart. It is to care when they are hurting, afraid, past their max. If this is difficult, imagine someone it is easy for you to open your heart to. Like a dog or a toddler. Feel the love and warmth you feel for a cute toddler and extend that to the adult in front of you.
- Respond:
  - Validate their experience: "Awe, I feel you" "That sucks" "I'm sorry you had to go through that in life" "I see how hard this has been" "You are not alone" "I'm here with you" (\*more examples at the bottom)
  - Curiosity: "I'd like to understand what this is like for you. Can you tell me more?" "What are you feeling or thinking?" "How is your being right now?" "What does this mean for you?"
  - Offer help:
    - i. Can I just be here with you while you are feeling this?
    - ii. What would you ideally like to hear from me right now?
    - iii. Can I help you in any way?

Attunement is also to not be too intrusive, or invasive and pushy about another revealing their emotional experience. It is to notice when they feel safe. When their nervous system relaxes. It's to care

Some more empathic response are...

"Awe, I feel you

That sucks  
I'm sorry you had to go through that in life  
I see how hard this has been  
You are not alone  
I'm here with you  
How are you feeling?  
I hear you.  
I don't even know what to say but I just want you to know that I'm with you and you are not alone.  
Loneliness sucks.  
I'm sorry this happened to you. Life's really not fair sometimes.  
What would feel supportive to you as you go through this?  
Whatever you are experiencing is valid. You are not choosing to feel this way. It's just what's coming to you.  
Of course you feel that. If I had that happen to me, I would feel that too.  
Thank you for sharing yourself with me. I appreciate it. It makes me feel closer to you.  
Crying is the best thing you can do when you're sad.  
Listen to your fear; it knows what it's doing.  
Jealousy is a really important signal – what's going on in your relationship?  
Grief is an essential part of love.  
What do you need?  
Let yourself fall apart and be a mess. I'll be here with you on the other side.  
Sometimes crying really helps to soothe the soul.  
Envy is normal when this kind of serious inequality is afoot!  
It's okay to just let it go now.  
Where does it hurt?  
I'd be angry too – that's not fair at all!  
Depression stops you when something is wrong; listen to it.  
Of course you feel that way!  
Feel what you need to feel until you don't need to feel it anymore.  
It's okay to cry, be angry, etc.  
Just be with that feeling.  
Your anxiety is helping you organize yourself and identify what's important.  
Let yourself feel into that.  
Is there some wisdom in your feeling? Is it trying to tell you something?  
Let your freak flag fly.  
Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our most accurate measure of courage.  
I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.  
Your hatred can tell you exactly where it hurts  
There are as many ways to be brave as there are fears.  
Go with the flow.  
Thank you for protecting our relationship by expressing your anger.  
Tears melt the ice around our hearts.  
I'm here hug. It's ok to feel what you feel.  
"Crawl inside this body. Find me where I am most ruined. Love me there." -Rune Lazuli  
Grief is love with nowhere to go. Do you want to create a boundary here?  
Let's breathe thru this together.  
Being vulnerable is badass!  
What do you wish you heard from them?

I acknowledge your experience.

I'm sorry.

You deserve all of your feelings.

Is there something specific I can do to help you feel validated?

Let's walk.

Can I get you some water?

Wanna dance?

How can I pray for you?

We can handle this together.

You are loved.

You are needed.

The cracks in your world is the light trying to get out.

It is okay to feel what you feel.

Yes, being an empath sucks sometimes, how can we help you not feel everything the world is throwing at you?

How can I help?

What do you need most in this moment?

Go ahead and feel the feelings. I did. They felt like shit.

There is no time limit on grief or healing.

Feelings are never wrong.

I can't imagine what you must be going through...if you feel comfortable sharing more, I am here to listen...if not, I can just sit quietly with you if you like.

How do you want to handle this?

It's ok to scream.

What scenario seems ideal here?

Can journaling help?

What helped in the past?

I wish more people were as real as you.

Let it out.

There's no time frame on this.

I honor your experience.

That's understandable.

This is natural.

This is normal.

Can I just hold your hand while you finish telling me?

Fuck them/them/it!

What would it look like if you were validated?

I'm not going anywhere

That emotion is logical.

Would it help you to hear a time I felt like that?

You are not alone.

Where in your body is that emotion?

Let's give that gentle awareness together.

If you didn't have to worry about being proper what would you say?

Are there any other co-emotions you notice?

What are the downsides to letting it go?

Does this feel connected to anything else?

Need a hug?

I love you no matter what.

God gave us emotion and understands.

I'm so grateful you trust me with this.

That sounds really hard

It's okay that you're not okay

How can I support you?

Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our most accurate measure of courage.