

# Invalidation

## Worksheet

Have you been accused of invalidating the thoughts and feelings of someone you care about, but you don't understand how that could be? Invalidation can be so subtle that we may be **unaware** we are guilty of it.

Inform the person that you do not want to invalidate them in any way and that you will do your best to **listen** to them more **carefully** and try to respond more thoughtfully. Also, ask the person to help you by pointing out your invalidating remarks "on the spot" (or as soon afterwards as possible).

**Use the form below to track your invalidating comments for one week.**

Use a **tally mark** to indicate the **Day** and the **Category** of each comment.

Invalidation Category & Examples	Sn	M	Tu	W	Th	F	St
<b>Ordering</b> - Smile! Be happy! Cheer up! Get over it! Grow up! Don't look so sad. Don't look so smug.							
<b>Isolating</b> - You're the only one that feels that way. It doesn't bother anyone else.							
<b>Minimizing Feelings</b> - You must be kidding. You can't be serious! Seriously?							
<b>Using Reason</b> - There's no reason you should feel that way. You're not being rational.							
<b>Judging &amp; Labeling</b> - You're a crybaby. You're too sensitive. You're overreacting.							
<b>Should'ing</b> - You should be excited. You should be happy. You shouldn't complain.							
<b>Sarcasm &amp; Mocking</b> - Oh, you poor thing. Did I hurt your little feelings?							
<b>Guilt Trips</b> - Don't you ever think of any one but yourself? What about my feelings?							
<b>Philosophizing / Clichés</b> - Time heals all wounds. Every cloud has a silver lining.							
<b>Religionizing</b> - I'll pray for you. God will help you.							

**Quote** your specific comments below and write **notes** to understand the dynamics. (Use reverse side if needed.)

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**Repeat** this assignment once a month to track your **progress** until you have **overcome** this relational sin.

# Invalidation

## Video Notes

Invalidation is the most **subtle** of the relational dysfunctions, but it is also the most **common**.

There are **4 dysfunctional traits** that are:

- Most common in all failed relationships.
- Strong predictors of divorce.
- Often learned in the home of origin.
- Tend to neutralize all the good in a relationship.

The traits are: 1. Escalation, **2. Invalidation**, 3. Negative Interpretation, 4. Withdrawal

Many relationships are plagued by more than one of these traits, because they tend to occur as “**co-morbidities**.” Any one dysfunctional trait can cause any of the other dysfunctional traits to develop.

Broad **Categories** of the different Forms of Invalidation with Specific **Examples**:

### Ordering

Smile! Be happy! Cheer up! Get over it! Grow up! Don't look so sad. Don't look so smug.

### Isolating

You're the only one that feels that way. It doesn't bother anyone else.

### Minimizing Feelings

You must be kidding. You can't be serious! Seriously?

### Using Reason

There's no reason you should feel that way. You're not being rational.

### Judging & Labeling

You're a crybaby. You're too sensitive. You're overreacting.

### Should'ing

You should be excited. You should be happy. You shouldn't complain.

### Sarcasm & Mocking

Oh, you poor thing. Did I hurt your little feelings?

### Guilt Trips

Don't you ever think of any one but yourself? What about my feelings?

### Philosophizing / Clichés

Time heals all wounds. Every cloud has a silver lining. There's a reason for everything.

### Religionizing

I'll pray for you. God will help you.

Many of these are good things to say in the right circumstances, but they become **invalidating** when you fail to first **listen carefully and empathize** with the person.

**The replacement behavior for Invalidation is: GOOD LISTENING.**

Let every man be **swift to hear**, slow to speak, slow to wrath. -- *James 1:19*

Sadly, most people are the exact **opposite**: slow to hear, quick to speak, and quick to wrath (anger). Also realize, it is our slowness to hear that often leads to escalation or withdrawal.

**Active, Empathic Listening** is so effective that the FBI developed a model that is based on it to use in hostage negotiations for preventing escalation that is built on Active Listening = **Behavioral Change Stairway Model:**

**Behavior Change**

Each step builds on the previous ones.

**Influence**

**Rapport**

**EMPATHY**

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

**This model saves lives, and it can save relationships, as well. It starts with Active Listening!**

### **Active Listening Skills**

- 1. Paraphrasing** - "Let me make sure I understand, are you saying... (what they said but in your own words)."
- 2. Summarizing** - "I hear what you're saying,... (what they said, but in a shorter version)."
- 3. Asking open-ended questions** - What, When, Where, How, but not Why.
  - These questions invite the person to express themselves and process things.
  - While assuring them that you are listening and not judging or accusing them.
- 4. Respond with "I" statements** - "When you tell me what happened to you, I feel so... (empathize)."

You do not need to **agree** with the person, but you should help them realize that they have been **understood**.

**Good, solid, sincere, active, empathic listening is the best way to help someone feel understood.**

**Try it. You will see the benefit.**