

Appendix E: Partner Exercise—Translating Judgments into Feelings

We recommend doing this exercise with a partner or in a small group. Each person needs a copy of the Feelings, Needs, and Physical Sensations sheet in Appendix D. You'll want to allow at least 30 minutes for this exercise.

Choose a judgment or interpretation that is commonly confused as a feeling (list below). This list is not exhaustive. You might wish to practice with other judgments as they occur to you.

Judgments that we might confuse for feelings:

Abandoned	Provoked	Unheard	Attacked	Tricked	Threatened
Insulted	Invisible	Diminished	Guilt-tripped	Betrayed	Unwanted
Pressured	Manipulated	Put down	Abused	Blamed	Interrupted
Unseen	Rejected	Left out	Unwanted	Misunderstood	
Minimized	Bullied	Cheated	Used	Coerced	

Ask for a volunteer who can find a situation where they mistook that judgment for how they felt. This person will be the speaker. The partner or group listens for one minute as the speaker shares what triggered their interpretation. Listeners then offer, one at a time, a feeling and need (from the Feelings, Needs, and Physical Sensations sheet) that they heard underlying the judgment.

When you think you're being _____ (judgment), are you feeling _____ (emotion) because you need/value _____ (need)?

For example, "When you think you're being misunderstood (judgment), are you feeling angry (emotion) because you need to be heard (need)?"

The speaker receives each listener's question with a simple yes or no, without elaborating. If speakers begin to cry or feel emotions, avoid comforting or consoling them to allow them to be with their feelings.

Once every listener has offered a feeling and need, allow for a one to two minute debrief. Switch to a different judgment from the list and repeat the process with a new speaker until everyone has had a chance to be a speaker.

Listen for statements beginning with "I feel that..." or "I feel they..." which tend to be judgments, not feelings. The words "that," "like," "as if," or pronouns or names/nouns that come after "I feel" often express a judgment. For example, "I feel like a failure," "I feel as if it is useless," "I feel they don't like me," or "I feel Pat is inconsiderate."