The Heart of Communication
Using Validation to Strengthen Advising Relationships

WHY IS VALIDATION IMPORTANT & WORTH YOUR TIME?

• ...CALM (& sometimes even eliminate) concerns, fears & uncertainties
• ...add a BOOST to others’ excitement and happiness
• ...provide SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT to others, even when an immediate ‘fix’ to a problem is not known
• ...more easily show UNDERSTANDING & COMPASSION
• ...help others feel SAFE & COMFORTABLE confiding in you
• ...avoid or quickly RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS
• ...GIVE ADVICE & GUIDANCE that sticks

ELEMENTS OF VALIDATION

• Acknowledges a specific emotion
• Offers justification for feeling that emotion
• Validation must be nonjudgmental

VALIDATION MISCONCEPTIONS

• Validating is only for negative emotions.
• You can’t validate if you don’t agree.
• Validation is simply repeating what the other person says.

FOUR-STEP VALIDATION METHOD

#1 – Listen Empathetically
• Give your full attention.
• Invite them to open up.
• Be observant.
• Match their energy.
• Offer micro validation.
• Don’t try to fix it.
#2 – Validate the Emotion
- Validate the emotion.
- Validate...even if you don’t agree.
- Not sure what the other person is feeling? Ask.
- If you can relate, consider letting them know.
- If you can’t relate, let them know.
- Tell the truth.

#3 – Offer Advice & Encouragement (if appropriate)
- Offering feedback or advice is entirely optional.
- Avoid giving unsolicited feedback.
- If you do give feedback, lead with a validating statement.
- Use “and” instead of “but.”
- Lead with “I” instead of “you.”
- Avoid absolutes.

#4 – Validate Again
- Re-validate the emotion.
- Validate the vulnerability.

“'If you want to make a difference in someone’s life, you don’t need to be gorgeous, rich, famous, brilliant, or perfect. You just have to care.’
—Karen Salmansohn