

The script successful couples use to solve conflict, from a Harvard professor who teaches an award-winning class on how to talk to people

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Almost 70% of relationship conflict is about perpetual problems, according to data from The Gottman Institute. Long-lasting, successful partnerships aren't immune to this reality. But, those couples are a bit better at coping with both trivial spats and more gnawing issues.

A romantic partnership is a "relentless journey of conflict management," says Alison Wood Brooks, an associate professor of business administration at Harvard Business School. Brooks teaches an award-winning course in the MBA curriculum about how to talk to people to achieve success in every aspect of business and life.

"It's not a sporadic challenge that romantic couples have to deal with," she says. "They need a tool kit that they have ready for almost every interaction so that they can confront these difficult moments whenever they pop up."

In her new book "Talk: The Science Of Conversation And The Art of Being Ourselves," she offers guidance on how to navigate uncomfortable conversations.

People who are "highly receptive use very specific language" when solving conflict, she says. They address their partner using these three steps:

Repeat back what the other person said. This signals you understand what your partner is saying and gives your partner a chance to correct you.

Validate their feelings. "They do a really good job affirming the other person and validating their feelings, even if they really, vehemently disagree with them," Brooks says.

Tell your side of the story. Once you have completely validated your partner's emotions, calmly express your own reasoning.

Altogether this might look like:

You are upset and annoyed that I didn't do [insert behavior]. It totally makes sense that you feel this way. This is why I did [insert behavior].

'In the absence of feeling accepted, folks are unlikely to be able to change'

This sounds straightforward, but in the heat of an argument many people neglect to express understanding.

“The affirming piece is really important and most of us forget to do it when we’re rushed and when we get defensive,” Brooks says.

The reason most couples get stuck in an argument is because they are fixated on being right. If you really want to work toward a solution, validating your partner’s feelings is crucial, Caroline Fleck, who is an adjunct clinical instructor at Stanford University and author of the upcoming book “Validation,” told CNBC Make It.

“Over the course of a 20-minute argument people are just repeating the same points,” Fleck said.

“They’re coming out in different ways, but they are repeating the same point because they don’t feel heard.”

When a person feels understood they are able to let their guard down.

“In the absence of feeling accepted, folks are unlikely to be able to change the things that they need to work on,” Fleck said.

By validating your partner, you can remind them you both are on the same team and working toward the same goal of resolution.