

How to Share Your Feelings With Your Partner: 15 Tips

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It's no secret that open communication is the bedrock of any healthy relationship. The willingness to understand each other and find solutions that work for both partners is crucial. But to achieve this, it's important to share your feelings and thoughts openly.

No one expects you to be a communication expert right away, and that's okay. The goal is simply to get better at it over time—both in sharing your emotions and in truly listening to your partner.

Emotional expression is a skill, and like any other, it can be developed with practice and dedication. When you know how to share your feelings with your partner and create an environment where your partner feels comfortable doing the same, it can bring countless benefits to your relationship.

Not only does it help build emotional intimacy, but it also strengthens trust and mutual understanding, which are key to the longevity and success of any partnership.

Why you should be talking about your feelings

Both men and women can shy away from expressing emotions, with women generally being more emotionally expressive, especially with positive emotions. However, emotional expression is important for both partners, regardless of gender.

If this issue isn't addressed, a lack of intimacy and emotional disconnection can lead to dissatisfaction in the relationship. Sharing your feelings allows your partner to understand you better, promoting trust and closeness.

Studies show that the way emotions are regulated by one partner can significantly impact both their psychological well-being and that of the other partner. Emotion regulation strategies are key in shaping interpersonal interactions and behaviors and how each partner responds to life events.

While vulnerability can feel risky, the emotional rewards—such as deeper connection and intimacy—are worth it.

5 benefits of sharing your feelings

Opening up and sharing your emotions with your partner can feel vulnerable, but understanding the positive impact it can have on your relationship may encourage you to take that step.

Honest emotional expression strengthens connections, improves communication, and fosters a healthier, more supportive environment for both partners.

Here are a few key benefits:

- Deeper understanding and intimacy: Sharing your feelings allows for a more profound connection, making you both feel understood and closer.
- De-escalation of conflicts: Expressing emotions calmly can reduce the intensity of arguments and promote better conflict resolution.
- Trust and empathy: Open emotional expression fosters trust and deepens empathy between partners.
- Prevents resentment: Honest communication helps to prevent unresolved issues from turning into resentment.
- Affirmation of self-worth: Regular emotional sharing reassures both partners that they value and appreciate each other.

How to share your feelings with your partner: 15 tips

Sharing your emotions with your spouse may not always come easily, especially if you're not accustomed to expressing your feelings openly. However, building a habit of sharing can help create a deeper emotional connection, prevent misunderstandings, and strengthen your relationship.

To make this process smoother, it's important to be mindful of timing, communication techniques, and personal growth. Here are 15 actionable tips to understand how to share your feelings with someone you love:

1. Change your perception of emotions

Emotions are neither good nor bad. We experience them because they have a purpose. If they didn't have an evolutive purpose, they wouldn't exist.

Emotions are not tumors; you can't cut them out and stop feeling altogether. If you want to deal with them better, you need to see them as your body's natural response to different situations.

- How to get started: Start by acknowledging that all emotions are valid. It's not a flaw but a natural reaction if you feel something. Try reframing your perspective from "I shouldn't feel this way" to "I'm feeling this, and it's okay."
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Difficulty in accepting emotions can lead to avoidance or repression of feelings. It may take time to shift perceptions and embrace emotions without judgment.

2. Learn about yourself through your emotions

In order to better manage emotions, you need to ask yourself, “Why do I feel like this at this moment? What is the trigger, and what is at stake?”

Emotions hold the key to better understanding yourself, your values, and your beliefs. When you are happy, your emotions are validated, and when you are upset, they are endangered or invalidated.

Grady Shumway, LMHC, says

“Understanding your emotions helps you gain insight into your triggers and values, making communicating your feelings with your partner easier.”

By reflecting on why you feel a certain way, you become more self-aware and can clearly share your emotions. This self-awareness reduces the risk of miscommunication and strengthens emotional intimacy in the relationship.”

It is easier to share your feelings with your spouse when you already know what you are sharing and understand it. The risk seems lessened because you are not verbalizing emotions for the first time in front of them.

- How to get started: When you feel a strong emotion, take a pause and reflect on what triggered it. Write down the feeling and explore its root cause. This will help you better understand your emotions before sharing them.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Emotions can be complex and confusing, making it hard to pinpoint the exact trigger or what is at stake, which may delay sharing or lead to miscommunication.

3. Use your words

If you are trying to learn to communicate your inner world more, you must be wondering how to talk about your feelings. The more articulate you feel in talking about them, the easier it is to share your feelings.

You feel more confident and in control. Thus, you are more likely to share your feelings. Start by describing the feeling—verbally or in writing. Whatever comes out is just fine. You are learning.

The more you do this, the more proficient you become, and it takes less time to understand what you are feeling. This is one of the keys to learning how to explain feelings to your partner.

- How to get started: Begin a daily journaling habit to track your feelings and articulate them. If you find it hard to describe an emotion, consult a feeling word list to help you express yourself.

- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Verbally expressing emotions can be difficult, especially if you're not used to it. This might result in hesitation or fear of miscommunication, causing delays in expressing yourself.

4. Accept feelings as a passing experience

When learning how to express your feelings, you may worry that you might say something that you can't take back. If this is one of your concerns, remember that feelings change.

You can always rely on using phrases like "at this moment" or "it's not always like this, but now I feel," as they can lift the weight of sharing from your shoulders.

Realizing emotions come and go can bring relief. This doesn't mean you shouldn't share your feelings. On the contrary, it should make sharing easier because you know that it's about the present moment and not let it color the entire relationship or person.

- How to get started: When you feel overwhelmed by an emotion, remind yourself it is temporary. Use a phrase like, "At this moment, I feel..." to make it clear that this feeling isn't permanent.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: It can be challenging to detach from intense emotions at the moment, especially when they feel urgent or overwhelming, making it harder to share thoughtfully.

5. Mind the time and place

In learning how to express emotions in a relationship more, keep timing in mind. If you choose an inadequate moment, you may feel invalidated and wrongly think emotions are dangerous for the relationship.

When one wants to share something, their partner may have a hard time hearing it. It's important to ask what the right time to talk is or check if they can commit to a conversation now.

Otherwise, they might not have space to listen and hear feedback, regardless of how constructive it is.

- How to get started: Before beginning an emotional conversation, ask your spouse when it would be a good time to talk. Avoid jumping into difficult discussions right after a stressful day.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Finding the right time to discuss emotions can be tricky, especially when the partner is busy or stressed. It can lead to avoiding the conversation altogether.

6. Don't postpone for too long and announce it casually

Once you have something to share, don't wait too long to address it. You will build it up in your mind. It will seem scarier and difficult to pronounce as time goes by.

When you know what it is you want to share, don't put off asking your partner what the best time is. Avoid the "we need to talk" dread. Instead, go for something more casual yet effective: "I wanted to discuss/share a thought/feeling I had."

Only postpone the conversation if you are extremely upset. In that state, you won't be able to articulate and control what you share, and you won't be ready to hear the other side either.

- How to get started: Choose a time when you feel calm but before the issue becomes more pressing. Use casual language to initiate the conversation, such as "I've been thinking about something, and I want to talk to you about it."
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Delaying discussions can build emotional tension, leading to overthinking or miscommunication. It can also cause unnecessary stress when finally addressing the issue.

7. Create a judgment-free space

No one opens up if they expect judgment. If you wonder how to become more articulate in expressing your thoughts, look for the answer in an open-minded manner.

When either partner shares, try to avoid getting defensive or irritated. Doing so can only impede future sharing.

If it's easier, you can dedicate a corner of the house as a "judgment-free sharing space."

- How to get started: Set aside a specific area of your home where you can discuss your feelings both calmly and without distractions. Let each other know that the goal is understanding, not judgment.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: The fear of judgment or misunderstanding can lead to reluctance to share. It may take time to establish a truly safe and open space for conversations.

8. Use "I" statements

To avoid triggering the other person into defensiveness, steer clear of "you" statements. Although you may reflect on their behavior and the effects you experience, focus on how you feel about it.

Instead of saying, "You make me furious when you...", say, "I feel angry when you..." This shifts the focus from the action to the realm of personal impressions, thus preventing unnecessary friction.

To make it more practical, divide it into three sections: name the emotion, mention the action that produced the emotion, and elaborate on why the action caused you to feel that way.

- How to get started: Practice formulating your thoughts in “I” statements. For example, try saying, “I feel upset when we don’t have time together because it makes me feel disconnected.”
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: It can be challenging to articulate feelings using “I” statements, especially in tense moments when emotions are running high. This may cause difficulty in avoiding blame.

9. Stay away from “always” and “never”

When you generalize, you leave no space for the other perspective.

If they are always insensitive, why should they try to hear you out now?

If you want to achieve a result in your partner being more attentive, avoid calling them the opposite.

Grady Shumway further adds,

“Avoiding words like “always” and “never” prevents your partner from feeling unfairly judged or discouraged. These generalizations shut down opportunities for growth and understanding.

Instead, focus on sharing your feelings when your needs aren’t met and offering positive reinforcement when they are. Acknowledging their efforts encourages a more supportive and attentive dynamic.”

Instead, share how you feel when your need is not met and how you feel when it is.

Bonus point: If you do this right after they did exactly what you needed, you are reinforcing their effort by praising them.

- How to get started: During a conversation, be mindful of your language. Instead of saying, “You never listen,” say, “I feel unheard when I try to express myself.”
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Generalizations such as “always” or “never” can make the partner feel unfairly criticized, leading to defensiveness or shutting down the conversation.

10. Renounce the expectation of them reading your mind

Many of us think true love is when we don’t need words to know what the other is thinking. While this is nice to have, it is less likely to be accomplished in a tense situation.

When fighting, we are more likely to jump to conclusions in search of certainty and safety. Upsetting events and conflicts with a partner trigger deep fears and patterns of thinking, so we are more likely to make mistakes in assuming what the other thinks.

Focus on using your words and leave the guessing and mind-reading for purchasing gifts.

- How to get started: Before assuming your partner knows your feelings, share your thoughts clearly. Let them know what's going on inside and encourage them to do the same.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Assuming your partner understands can lead to frustration or misunderstanding, especially if they don't express themselves as clearly, making it harder to connect emotionally.

11. Be open with your intentions

Don't be deceitful if you want to express more in a relationship. If you ask them about their feelings because you have an agenda or want to gain something, be upfront about it. They will see through you; next time, they will be reluctant to share.

If you need to know how they feel about a topic or you, ask them, but don't hide it behind genuine concern about their well-being. The same goes for when you share your feelings.

- How to get started: Be transparent with your partner. If you are looking for advice or validation, say so. If you want an honest conversation, express that intention from the start.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Being completely honest may feel vulnerable, especially if you fear rejection or misunderstanding. This can make it difficult to open up fully about your intentions.

12. Address the pressure or expectations first

One of the reasons why it is easier to share in a therapist's office is because it is a neutral environment.

There is no pressure to say the right thing or expectations hidden behind "How are you?"

If you feel pressured to share your feelings with your partner, address how that makes you feel first. The conversation moves from "not wanting to share" to "what is needed to share more freely." This promotes communication and openness.

- How to get started: If you feel pressured, calmly explain that you need space to process before you talk. This way, you relieve pressure and avoid rushed responses.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Feeling pressure can lead to withholding emotions or providing incomplete responses, as it may feel like the conversation has an underlying expectation, reducing openness.

13. Trust your partner's good intentions

Assuming your partner is a caring person who wants to invest in the relationship, you might benefit from remembering that when you feel scared to share.

Research indicates that trusting someone does not guarantee they will never betray or hurt you—it simply reflects a belief or hope that they will not. In many cases, previous experiences, especially those involving broken trust, can strongly influence how much trust a person can extend to a new partner.

Think of situations when you shared, and it all went well. Recall situations in which they showed how much they cared; it can also help you open up this time.

- How to get started: Before opening up, take a moment to recall a few times your partner supported you emotionally. Let those memories guide your expectations rather than fear or doubt.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: You may find it hard to believe your partner cares if you have been let down before—either by them or others in your past. Trusting good intentions can feel risky when you fear rejection, judgment, or indifference.

14. Be prepared to hear feedback

Communication is a two-way street. If you decide to share your feelings, there is a high chance your partner will have a reaction they will want to share with you, too.

If you realize all you need, at this time, is for them to hear you out and refrain from responding, ask them directly. Make sure to set aside some time later so they can share their impressions, and you can listen to them this time.

- How to get started: Before beginning a conversation, clarify what you need. Say something like, “I need you to just listen for now,” and then offer a specific time to come back and hear their response.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: You may worry that opening up will invite criticism or conflict. If you fear being misunderstood or overwhelmed by their feedback, you might hesitate to initiate the conversation at all.

15. Make it a regular thing

The more you practice, the better you will become. Therefore, arrange a time when you can check in with your partner occasionally. Having a pre-set time can decrease the pressure of having to organize time and place.

Furthermore, reflecting and sharing more often helps you become more self-conscious. That, in turn, helps you recognize the deeper underlying feelings that are often more difficult to approach.

For example, when angry, you do not always see that underneath you are sad, hurt, or embarrassed.

The more you reflect, the easier it becomes to identify the deep-seated feelings that drive your behavior and decisions just as much as the surface ones.

- How to get started: Suggest a regular check-in time with your partner, such as once a week or biweekly. Use that time to gently explore how you have been feeling and encourage them to do the same.
- Possible challenges in expressing feelings: Consistency might feel unnatural or awkward at first. You may feel self-conscious or unsure of what to share, especially if emotions have been bottled up for a long time or if your partner is still learning to engage emotionally.

How to handle a partner who doesn't open up

When a partner does not open up, it can leave you feeling shut out or unsure of where you stand.

Start by creating a safe space—approach them gently, without pressure or judgment. Instead of demanding answers, express curiosity: “I would like to understand what is going on for you when you are ready to share.”

Choose low-pressure moments to connect, like during a walk or while doing a shared activity. Be consistent with your emotional availability, and avoid jumping to conclusions.

Sometimes, a partner's silence is rooted in fear, habit, or past experiences. If the wall remains, suggest couples counseling not as a fix but as a space to learn how to better connect and communicate as a team