

# Tough Talk Preparation Sheet



Cup of Empathy

# *Tough Talk Preparation Sheet*

If you want to address something with your partner/friend/colleague, preparing yourself ensures a more smooth, effective and connecting conversation. It takes 10-20 minutes to follow this sheet, depending on the gravity of the situation. By the end you'll have more clarity and confidence that you can handle this talk.  
Enjoy the process!

*Marianne*



# Step 1

## Get clear with yourself

- 1. What they did.** Write down what they did or said that triggered you. Try to make it as neutral as possible. So not: 'He is late all the time'. Instead, say: 'He said he would be home at 6 and now it is 7'.
- 2. What you think.** Write down all the judgments and thoughts you have around this. For example: 'He should be on time', 'He doesn't care about me', 'He is disorganized'.

- 3. How you feel.** Check the sheets with feelings on the next page. Every feeling is caused by a thought. Note down the feeling that is triggered by each thought that you found at 2.
- 4. What you need.** Check the sheet with needs on page 4. Behind each thought is a need. Which ones touch you? Write them down as well.
- 5. What you want.** Come up with a few requests that could meet the needs. The need is abstract, your requests will be very concrete. For example: I have a need for clarity about my evening. My request is whether you would text me as soon as you know you'll be late?. The more ideas you have, the better – in case someone says 'no' to your first request.

**Bonus:** think about what could be the need of the person behind doing or saying what they did at #1. This will be a start of feeling more compassion for them.



## Feelings when my needs are fulfilled

## Feelings when my needs are not fulfilled



### Physical feelings

relaxed  
comfortable  
energetic  
centered  
balanced  
big  
soft  
strong  
lively  
in flow  
full  
free

### Well-rested

refreshed  
restored  
recharged  
awake  
alert

### Peaceful

calm  
quiet  
bright  
zen  
at ease  
relieved  
serene  
carefree  
unconcerned

### Satisfied

fulfilled  
satisfied  
content

### Cheerful

happy  
amused  
joyous  
cheerful  
delighted  
ecstatic

### Enthusiastic

excited  
adventurous  
playful  
lively  
eager  
passionate  
thrilled  
radiant

### Loving

tender  
warm  
openhearted  
compassionate  
friendly  
sympathetic  
touched

### Thankful

grateful  
moved  
touched

### Amazed

surprised  
flabbergasted

### Hopeful

heartened  
encouraged  
desirous  
optimistic

### Curious

fascinated  
interested  
engaged  
involved  
inspired

### Confident

resolute  
confident  
powerful  
open  
proud  
safe

### Physical feelings

pain  
limp  
empty  
small  
smothered  
short of breath  
tense  
wretched  
sick

### Sad

disappointed  
dispirited  
melancholic  
depressed  
down  
gloomy  
desirous  
nostalgic

### Regret

guilty  
repentance

### Worried

tense  
nervous  
anxious

### Pain

hurt  
lonely  
wretched  
mourning

### Vulnerable

fragile  
uncertain  
sensitive

### Tired

defeated  
burnt-out  
exhausted  
sleepy  
weary

### Withdrawn

bored  
detached  
isolated  
alienated  
apathetic  
cold  
numb  
impatient

### Ashamed

guilty  
embarrassed  
shy

### Desperate

helpless  
hopeless  
powerless  
uncertain

### Skeptical

torn  
lost  
bewildered  
perplexed  
confused

### Scared

afraid  
suspicious  
panic  
paralyzed  
startled  
anxious

### Uncomfortable

troubled  
nervous  
restless  
uncertain  
insecure

### Envious

jealous

### Shocked

startled  
upset  
surprised  
disturbed  
alert  
panic  
overwhelmed

### Frustrated

irritated  
annoyed  
impatient  
embittered  
irritable

### Rage

angry  
mad  
upset  
furious  
resentful

### Hate

hostile  
aversion  
bitter  
loathing  
contempt

## Needs

### **Physical well-being**

air  
food  
water  
shelter  
protection  
(emotional)  
safety  
movement  
rest  
sleep  
touch  
sexual  
    expression  
health  
comfort  
warmth

### **Harmony**

peace  
tranquility  
relaxation  
beauty  
order  
ease  
predictability  
familiarity  
stability  
balance  
completion  
wholeness

### **Autonomy**

choice  
freedom  
time  
space  
independence

### **Power**

self-esteem  
confidence  
dignity  
inner power  
empowerment  
competence  
effectiveness

### **Pleasure**

to celebrate  
to mourn  
flow  
humor  
laughter  
vitality  
challenge  
stimulation

### **Connection**

collaboration  
reciprocity  
communication  
company  
to belong  
durability  
continuity  
to give  
to receive  
to see / to be seen  
to hear / to be heard  
to understand  
to be understood

### **Liveliness**

to discover  
adventure  
passion  
spontaneity  
play

### **Authenticity**

honesty  
integrity  
transparency  
openness  
self-expression

### **Meaning**

to learn  
growth  
to contribute  
to enrich life  
hope  
creativity  
inspiration  
purpose  
clarity  
awareness  
liberation  
transformation  
to matter  
participate  
to be present  
simplicity

### **Love and attention**

love  
compassion  
care  
attention  
acceptance  
appreciation  
reassurance  
affection  
trust  
involvement  
respect  
care  
support  
nearness  
intimacy  
tenderness  
softness  
sensitivity  
friendliness



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## Step 2

### Phrase it for the other

In order to come up with a cohesive story, put together what you found at 1,3,4 and 5. You leave out the judgments and thoughts at no.2, to ensure a higher chance for connection ;-).

**Put it together with this formula:**

'When you did/said no.1, I felt no.3, because I need no4.  
How would it be for you to do no.5?'

**NOTE TWO THINGS:**

1. I don't say 'I feel .. because YOU did ..' That leads to people defending themselves. I say: 'I feel because I need...'
2. I start my request with 'How would it be for you', instead of 'could you'. This creates more openness in the other person to brainstorm with you what they could say yes to.



## *Step 3:* **Find the right moment**

Sometimes someone is not open to hear you, not because of your message, but just because they are full, tired or in their PMS...or maybe you are! Ask the person when would be a good time to talk and let them know roughly how much time you would need.





## *Step 4:* **Keep learning!**

If you feel like your situation is complicated and you need some more support, check out one of my webinars (some are recorded and sometimes there are live ones)

**Click here for the  
webinars:**

[www.cupofempathy.com/  
webinar](http://www.cupofempathy.com/webinar)



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