

# THE LOVE SCOUT

*Relationship Therapist*



## REALITY SHARING

When we have an emotional response to a person, situation or event, rather than reacting, it is helpful to articulate our experience and emotion in a functional way so that we don't carry it with us into the future. The reality sharing formula will allow you to express yourself without blame and create an opportunity for functional communication.

1. Can I share my reality with you?
2. When I saw/heard/experienced...
3. What I felt was...
4. (OPTIONAL) What this triggered from my past was...
5. What I thought about myself was....

Each step has an important role in the greater structure of the conversation.

1. **ASK FOR CONSENT** - It's important you consider the other person's needs & emotional state, not only to have the best possible outcome, but also as a courtesy to them. Nobody appreciates emotional dumping when they are already tired/stressed. Check in and ask for consent.
2. **STATE THE FACTS** - Don't get lost in story. What did the person actually say and do? Try to stay as objective as possible.
3. **EXPLAIN YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE** - Use feeling words such as anger, sadness, fear, frustration, rage, irritation, guilt, shame to express how you felt.
4. **TRACE TO THE ORIGIN** - If there is a disproportionate feeling or reaction to the current situation, chances are you have been triggered from a past event that made you feel a similar way. Knowing & articulating this will help you and the other person make sense of your emotions and handle the situation functionally.
5. **SHARE CORE BELIEFS** - Using only I statements, express how this situation made you feel about yourself. Often there will be themes that run through your life from childhood. Refer to the Core Beliefs poster to help expand your vocabulary.

To respond to a reality share, make eye contact and reply "I hear you". All you want to do is validate the other person's experience. There is no commentary, judgment or critique. If you do find it imperative to reply, wait 24 hours and use this formula.