

If I use this card to manipulate,  
control or win, it won't work

# HARD

## Heal A Relational Disconnect

## Listener's Card

If the Sender shares heavy emotions with me when I am the cause, answer these seven questions:

1. Is it more important for me to **appear right or blameless** than to **restore the relationship**?
2. Am I about to respond in an **uninterested, impatient, fawning, dismissive or emotionally disconnected** way?
3. Am I about to **turn the attention to me** by telling **my** story or **signaling/demanding** that **my** needs be attended to?
4. Am I about to **offer a solution or advice, mentor, teach or coach** without them requesting it?
5. Am I about to **diminish or invalidate** with any version of *You shouldn't feel that way, That's not what I intended, or Well, at least...*?
6. Am I **listening for what I don't agree with, listening to find distortions, exaggerations and inaccuracies**, so I can **counter or correct the facts** (as I perceive them) and thus **judge the Sender's feelings as wrong, unfair, untrue or unimportant**?
7. Am I about to **blame, criticize or shame** the Sender?

If NO, use the appropriate steps below as I talk.

If YES, don't talk yet. Re-engage when I can begin with appreciation and be curious about the Sender's experience of me

1. **Gain Perspective.** *Would you reassure me you love [or care about] me, that repair and reconnection are your goal, that I'm not the sum of my faults, and that we can build trust & understanding through this HARD card process?*
2. **Be With and Lend Strength.** *Thank you for trusting me enough to heal a disconnect. I'm glad to be with you—even if this is hard. I'm strong & calm enough to welcome your emotions. [Note: If I am tempted to correct/defend/explain, I'll ask the Sender to pause, and write it down]*
3. **Listen and Reflect.** *You started by saying, When \_\_\_ happened, you felt \_\_\_, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. Would you share more feelings from the Vault? [Record each one]*
  - a) *As I read them back, would you say more about each feeling? [R]\**
  - b) *Did I get that? Are there more? [If YES, go back to 3a until the answer is No]*
  - c) *Which emotion stands out and where did you feel it in your body? [R]*
  - d) *How do you feel about feeling this way? [R]*
  - e) *Does a part of you feel differently? [R]*
4. **Check-in with Myself:** *[Am I tempted to give red zone responses? If YES:] I really want to hear you, but I'm feeling overwhelmed. Can we take a short break and come back in a few minutes? [If NO Go to Step 5]*
5. **Attune with Compassionate Curiosity.** *Thank you for the feeling words and your patience as I mirrored them back.*
  - a) *When the disconnect happened, what story did you tell yourself? [R]*
  - b) *Sometimes what we feel inside doesn't match what's on the outside. What might your words, tone & body language have conveyed? [R]*
  - c) *What was the most painful, raw feeling...maybe afraid, alone, abandoned, invisible, hopeless, ashamed, inadequate, powerless, or unprotected? [R]*
6. **Name the Deep Need.** *This feels important and I don't want to miss this...*
  - a) *Would you finish this: What I really needed in that moment was \_\_\_? [R]*
  - b) *Optional: When have you felt the pain of this unmet need before? [R]*
7. **Summarize & Reflect.** *Thank you for all of this. Can I summarize and reflect back what you said? When I \_\_\_, you felt \_\_\_. The story you told yourself was \_\_\_. What you really needed in that moment was \_\_\_ but I \_\_\_. [If 6b was asked] You felt this unmet need before when \_\_\_. Did I get that?*
8. **Validate & Empathize.** *What you're feeling makes sense. You're not crazy. I feel how \_\_\_ you must have felt. As I listen, I feel the weight of this with you. Seeing this through your eyes helps me understand how you experienced me.*
9. **Seek Repair.** *I'm so sorry I \_\_\_. I can see the impact my \_\_\_ had on you. You didn't deserve that. I wish I could undo it, but I can't. I can own the harm and learn from it. I regret the pain I caused, and I commit to notice and repair relational ruptures to better meet your need for \_\_\_.*
10. **Check-in with the Sender.** *For this disconnect, do you feel like I understand you—that I get what you're feeling and needing? Do you feel safer, closer, known and connected because you see I care and want to set things right? If not, I want to keep listening until you do. [If the Sender says no, go back to Step 3]*
11. **Make a Plan.** *Could we brainstorm specific ways we can recognize when this kind of disconnect might occur, and how to prevent it or repair it sooner?*
12. **Offer Care.** *What would feel good to you right now? We could: hug, listen to Jesus together, share what's been good about this process, take a walk, take some space to reflect, or something else?*