Soft Startups

communication skill

When bringing up a problem to your partner, the first three minutes are crucial. A **soft startup** sets a positive tone and helps resolve conflict. By starting a conversation calmly and respectfully, you and your partner are more likely to focus on the *problem*, rather than who's to blame.

Save the conversation for a calm moment.

- Wait for a time when you and your partner are alone, without distractions or interruptions.
- Make sure you and your partner are relaxed, and not tired, hungry, or stressed.

Use gentle body language and tone of voice.

- Take an attitude of teamwork and problem-solving, rather than arguing or blaming.
- Speak calmly, without raising your voice.
- Avoid hurtful body language, such as eye rolling, scowling, or mocking.

Use "I" statements to express how you feel.

- Focus on how a problem is affecting you, rather than assigning blame.
- Say: "I feel [emotion] when [situation]."

Examples:

Without "I" statement: *"You're so closed off. We need to talk more."*

With "I" statement: *"I feel lonely when we don't talk."*

Describe the problem clearly.

- Discuss only one problem at a time.
- Be specific. Broad complaints like "the house is a mess" may be misunderstood.

Be respectful.

- Make a polite request, rather than a demand.
- Thank your partner for listening and addressing a problem.

Examples:

"Could you please…"

"I would appreciate if…"

"Thank you for…"

"Would you mind…"

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