Tab 1

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# Day Title

Love Styles: The Ways We Give and Receive Love

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

The seven love styles, Activity, Appreciation, Emotional, Financial, Intellectual, Physical, and Practical, show the diverse ways people express and receive love. Understanding these patterns helps us avoid misunderstandings, communicate needs, and recognize the love already flowing in our relationships.

# Daily Passage

Love is universal, yet the ways we express and experience it vary widely. Each of us has natural tendencies in how we give affection and in how we feel loved in return. Some people feel most connected through conversation, others through touch, and others through shared experiences. Recognizing these patterns—our love styles—can help us understand ourselves more fully and navigate relationships with greater compassion.

One helpful model comes from Truity’s work on seven love styles, which expands the picture beyond the more commonly known “five love languages” (Truity, n.d.). Unlike the simpler framework, these seven categories offer a more nuanced view of how love shows up in everyday life. They are not rigid boxes but guiding patterns that can help us see both our own preferences and those of the people we care about.

**Activity Love** is about connection through shared experiences. People with this style feel closest when they spend quality time with others, whether it is going for a walk, cooking together, or joining in adventures. The activity itself matters less than the sense of togetherness it creates.

**Appreciation Love** thrives on verbal affirmation and gratitude. Those with this style want to hear that their efforts matter and that their presence is valued. A simple “thank you” or “I love how you…” can go a long way in filling their emotional cup.

**Emotional Love** centers on depth of feeling and openness. People with this style feel loved when they can share their inner world and be met with empathy. They value heartfelt conversations, vulnerability, and reassurance that their emotions are accepted and respected.

**Financial Love** expresses care through generosity with money or resources. This does not necessarily mean lavish spending; it can be as simple as treating someone to coffee or covering expenses as an act of support. For people with this style, financial giving represents security, investment, and tangible care.

**Intellectual Love** is about meeting mind-to-mind. People with this style feel closest when they can share ideas, debate concepts, or explore meaningful topics. Conversation is not just chatter but a way of connecting deeply. Being seen and engaged intellectually affirms love for them.

**Physical Love** involves closeness through touch, ranging from hugs and hand-holding to sexual intimacy. For those with this style, touch is the primary channel through which they feel safe, grounded, and connected.

**Practical Love** expresses itself through helpfulness and acts of service. People with this style show care by making life easier for others. Some examples are running errands, fixing a meal, or taking on tasks. To them, love is action, and they feel most loved when support is reciprocated.

Most of us embody a mix of these styles, though some may feel more central than others. Misunderstandings often arise when our primary style differs from that of someone close to us. For example, someone with a strong Physical Love style may feel disconnected if their partner rarely touches them, while the partner, with a Practical Love style, may believe they are showing love every day through helpful actions. Both are expressing care, but in different dialects.

Exploring love styles is not about changing who we are but about broadening our fluency. When we understand the ways others give love, we are less likely to dismiss or overlook their efforts. When we share our own style openly, we give others the chance to meet us in ways that feel nourishing.

It can also be liberating to realize that love is not limited to one form. A relationship that once felt flat may begin to bloom when we notice the subtle ways love is already being expressed. Love is not only in big declarations or dramatic gestures; it is also in the small, everyday ways we show up for each other.

Ultimately, learning our love styles is about creating bridges. When we become fluent in these seven expressions, we not only deepen our ability to give love but also expand our capacity to receive it. Love is always present, but our awareness of it helps it come alive.

# Alternative View

While love styles are helpful, they are not fixed categories. Reducing ourselves or others to a single style risks oversimplifying complex dynamics. Love is fluid, and styles may shift depending on the relationship, life stage, or cultural context.

# Activity

Which of the seven love styles feels most natural for you when you show care?

Which styles make you feel most loved, and do they match how you give love?

Have you ever overlooked someone’s love because it came in a form you did not easily recognize?

How might you experiment with expressing love in a style that is less natural to you but meaningful to someone you care about?

Tool to create:

Love Style Tool

# Sources

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# Domain

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Tab 2

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# Day Title

Working with Differences in Love Styles

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

# Differences in love styles often create misunderstanding, but they do not mean love is absent. By naming our own needs, staying curious about others, and stretching into new expressions, we can bridge these differences. Flexibility, effort, and communication allow love to flourish in many forms.

# Daily Passage

No two people love in exactly the same way. One person may feel most cherished through deep conversations, while another longs for affectionate touch. One may show love by fixing a leaky faucet, while another by writing heartfelt notes. These differences in love styles are natural, but without awareness they can lead to disappointment, frustration, or even a sense of being unloved. Learning to work with differences in love styles helps us expand our perspective, receive love more fully, and create deeper connection.

According to Truity’s model of seven love styles (Truity, n.d.), people express and receive care through Activity, Appreciation, Emotional, Financial, Intellectual, Physical, and Practical Love. When our dominant styles differ from those of the people we love, misunderstandings can easily arise. For example, a person with a Practical Love style might believe they are showing deep care by cooking dinner every night, while their partner with an Appreciation Love style might be longing to hear, “Thank you for being you. I love you.” Both are offering love, yet it may not land in a way that feels nourishing.

When these differences collide, it can create a cycle of misunderstanding. One partner may think, *“I’m doing everything I can to show you I love you—why don’t you see it?”* while the other may think, *“You never give me what I really need.”* Without reflection, both people may feel unappreciated. The truth, however, is not that love is absent but that it is being spoken in different styles.

Bridging these differences begins with curiosity and communication. Instead of assuming we already know how love “should” look, we can ask: *What makes you feel most loved? How do you tend to show love?* These conversations invite honesty and clarity. They also signal respect—we are showing that we value the other person enough to learn their love style.

At the same time, it is important to voice our own needs. Many of us quietly hope that others will just know how to love us, but rarely is it that simple. Saying, *“I feel closest when we spend time together”* or *“I love when you hold my hand—it makes me feel safe”* gives our loved ones the chance to meet us in meaningful ways. Sharing these needs may feel vulnerable, but it prevents the silent buildup of unmet expectations.

Working with differences in love styles also requires flexibility. We may not always get love in our preferred style, and that is okay. A partner who struggles with words may never write poetic letters, but their acts of service may still hold deep devotion. A friend who rarely gives gifts may show their love by being fully present in conversation. By widening our lens, we can recognize love in forms that may not come naturally to us.

At the same time, relationships flourish when both people are willing to stretch. Love is not only about what feels easy, it is also about growing to meet each other. A person with a strong Intellectual Love style can practice offering more affection through touch. Someone rooted in Physical Love can stretch into words of appreciation. These gestures may feel awkward at first, but they communicate care through effort and willingness.

It helps to remember that learning a new love style is like learning a new skill. We will not be fluent overnight. The point is not perfection but intention. When we see our loved ones trying to meet us in our style, even imperfectly, it builds trust and warmth.

Ultimately, working with differences in love styles is about generosity. Instead of keeping score—who gives more, who loves better—we can ask: *How can I honor your love style while honoring my own?* This mutual curiosity and care create a relationship where love can be expressed in many voices, all adding to the richness of connection.

# Alternative View

While adapting to a partner’s love style is important, it should not mean abandoning our own. If we constantly give in a way that does not feel natural or receive love only in a style that feels empty, resentment may grow. True intimacy requires balance by valuing both our own needs and those of others.

# Activity

Which love style do you most naturally give, and which do you most naturally receive?

Have you ever felt unloved because someone was expressing love in a style different from yours?

What small way could you stretch into your partner’s, friend’s, or family member’s love style this week?

How can you better communicate your own needs without blaming or shaming?

Tool to create:

Love Styles tool

# Sources

Truity (n.d.). *The Seven Love Styles*. Retrieved from [Truity.com](https://www.truity.com/blog/page/seven-love-styles) Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly*. Penguin Random House  
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The Need to Belong: Why We Trade Authenticity for Belonging

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

Belonging is a core human need, as shown in Maslow’s hierarchy. From childhood, we often sacrifice authenticity for belonging, as Gabor Maté explains, because attachment is essential for survival. As adults, healing means creating spaces where belonging and authenticity can coexist, so we feel accepted without abandoning ourselves.

# Daily Passage

At the heart of being human is the need to belong. From our earliest days, survival depends on connection. Babies cannot feed themselves, protect themselves, or regulate their emotions alone. It is through closeness with caregivers that we stay alive. This need for belonging does not end with childhood. Throughout life, we are wired to seek acceptance, connection, and a sense of place within relationships and communities. Belonging is not optional; it is a basic human need.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow placed love and belonging at the center of his hierarchy of needs. According to his model, once our basic physical needs (like food and shelter) and safety needs (like protection from harm) are met, the next essential layer is belonging. Without it, our psychological health falters. We cannot thrive without feeling part of a family, group, or community where we matter and are accepted. Belonging provides the soil in which our self-esteem and self-actualization can grow.

Yet there is a tension here, one that physician and author Gabor Maté speaks about often: when forced to choose between authenticity and belonging, children will sacrifice authenticity almost every time. Authenticity is our ability to stay connected to our own inner truth, which are our feelings, needs, and instincts. But if being authentic risks rejection by our caregivers, the drive for belonging wins. For example, a child who senses that anger is not welcome in the family may learn to suppress their anger to avoid disconnection. A child whose needs feel like “too much” may learn to silence them in order to preserve belonging.

This survival strategy makes sense in childhood, when belonging truly is a matter of life or death. But as adults, the same pattern can leave us cut off from ourselves. We may downplay our needs in relationships, hide parts of who we are, or live in fear that being fully ourselves will cost us connection. In this way, the basic need to belong can sometimes come at the expense of our authenticity.

Belonging without authenticity is fragile. When we mold ourselves to fit in, we may gain acceptance, but we often feel unseen. On the other hand, authenticity without belonging can feel isolating. Speaking our truth in environments that cannot hold it can leave us vulnerable and disconnected. The challenge, then, is to cultivate relationships where both belonging and authenticity can coexist.

The body often signals when authenticity and belonging are in conflict. A knot in the stomach may appear when we agree to something we do not truly want. A tightening in the throat may show up when we silence words we long to say. These bodily cues are invitations to pause and notice: Am I giving up my authenticity here in order to belong? And is this belonging real if it requires me to hide myself?

Healing involves learning that true belonging is not about fitting in but about being accepted as we are. This often means practicing small acts of authenticity in safe relationships; such as sharing our honest opinion, saying no when we need to, or naming an uncomfortable truth. Each time we do, we test whether belonging can hold both our connection and our authenticity.

We can also begin to reframe belonging itself. Belonging is not only about being accepted by others, it is also about belonging to ourselves. When we honor our needs, feelings, and truths, we create an inner home where authenticity is safe. From that grounded place, we are better able to choose relationships that allow for real belonging rather than conditional acceptance.

The need to belong is not a flaw but a deep truth of our humanity. It is what bonds us into families, friendships, and communities. The work of adulthood is to learn that we do not have to lose ourselves to keep belonging. True intimacy, and true community, come when we bring our full selves into the circle and are met with care.

# Alternative View

Not every environment can hold our full authenticity. In some contexts, protecting ourselves by moderating what we share is wise. Discernment is key—while we seek authentic belonging, it is also important to choose where and with whom we risk that vulnerability.

# Activity

Where in your life have you chosen belonging over authenticity?

What bodily cues alert you that you may be hiding yourself to stay connected?

What is one small way you could practice authenticity this week without losing a sense of connection?

What does true belonging mean to you, and how do you know when you feel it?

Tool to create:

Authenticity over Approval tool

# Sources

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# Day Title

Attachment

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

Attachment theory describes four main styles: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. These are patterns shaped by early caregiving that influence how we love and connect as adults. Each style carries somatic cues, from warmth and steadiness in secure attachment to restlessness, tension, or collapse in insecure styles. With compassion and practice, we can move toward earned secure attachment.

# Daily Passage

Attachment theory helps us understand how our earliest relationships shape the way we connect with others throughout life. First developed by John Bowlby (1969) and expanded by Mary Ainsworth (1978), attachment research shows that infants bond with caregivers in different ways, depending on how consistently their needs are met. These early patterns become “blueprints” that influence how we love, trust, and respond to intimacy in adulthood.

The four main attachment styles are not fixed labels but patterns. The styles are: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. They exist on a spectrum, and many of us show traits from more than one. Importantly, attachment styles are not destiny. With awareness, compassion, and practice, we can move toward greater security in our relationships.

**Secure Attachment** Securely attached people trust that closeness is safe. As children, their caregivers were generally responsive and attuned, which taught them that their needs would be met. As adults, secure individuals tend to feel comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. They can ask for what they need, offer support, and recover from conflict more easily. Somatically, secure attachment often feels like warmth in the body, steady breath, and relaxation when with loved ones. There is a sense of balance. Connection feels safe, and taking space does not feel threatening.

**Anxious Attachment** Anxious attachment develops when caregiving is inconsistent. Sometimes the child’s needs are met, sometimes not, leaving them unsure about whether love is reliable. As adults, people with this style may crave closeness yet fear abandonment. They might overanalyze a partner’s words, worry about being “too much,” or need frequent reassurance. In the body, anxious attachment often shows up as a racing heart, a pit in the stomach, or restlessness when there is distance. The nervous system is primed for vigilance, always scanning for signs of rejection.

**Avoidant Attachment** Avoidant attachment forms when caregivers are emotionally unavailable or dismissive of the child’s needs. To cope, the child learns to minimize their vulnerability. As adults, avoidantly attached people often value independence and may feel uncomfortable with too much closeness. They might withdraw during conflict or downplay the importance of relationships. Somatically, avoidance can feel like numbness, tension in the shoulders, or shallow breathing. The body braces against being overwhelmed, keeping intimacy at arm’s length to maintain safety.

**Disorganized Attachment** Disorganized attachment arises when the caregiver is both a source of comfort and fear, often in situations of trauma or neglect. The child faces an impossible bind: the person they turn to for safety is also the source of distress. As adults, people with disorganized attachment may experience a push-pull dynamic. They may long for closeness yet panic when it arrives. Somatically, this can feel like sudden shifts between hyperarousal (racing heart, agitation) and collapse (heaviness, numbness). The nervous system oscillates between approach and avoidance, making relationships feel unpredictable.

It is important to remember that these patterns are not character flaws. They are adaptations, or creative strategies our younger selves developed to survive. Anxious attachment is a strategy to stay close. Avoidant attachment is a strategy to stay safe. Disorganized attachment is a strategy to cope with impossible circumstances. Seen this way, attachment styles are not problems to be “fixed” but survival wisdom that deserves compassion.

At the same time, these patterns are not fixed. Research shows that people can and do move toward earned secure attachment (Roisman et al., 2002). Through self-awareness, supportive relationships, therapy, and practices like mindfulness and somatic regulation, we can teach our nervous systems new ways of relating. For example, an anxiously attached person can learn to soothe their body when triggered, while an avoidantly attached person can experiment with small acts of vulnerability. Each step builds the capacity for greater security.

Understanding attachment styles gives us language for our inner experiences and compassion for others. Instead of labeling ourselves or our partners as “too needy” or “too distant,” we can recognize these behaviors as echoes of early patterns. From this awareness, intimacy becomes less about blame and more about healing.

# Alternative View

Attachment theory offers a valuable lens, but it does not capture the whole story of human connection. Our ways of relating are also shaped by culture, personality, trauma, and the many experiences that have shaped our lives. If we lean too heavily on attachment labels, we risk oversimplifying this complexity. It is also important to remember that attachment is not fixed. We may feel secure in one relationship, yet in another, a partner’s avoidant style might stir anxious reactions in us.

# Activity

Which attachment style (or combination) feels most familiar to you?

What bodily sensations arise in you when you experience closeness, distance, or conflict?

How might you show compassion for the protective strategies your attachment patterns represent?

What is one small step you can take toward secure relating this week?

Tool to create:

Attachment Style tool

# Sources

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and Loss*. Basic Books  
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# Day Title

# How Adult Relationships Mirror the Parent-Child Bond

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

Adult relationships often mirror the parent-child bond because our nervous system carries early lessons about safety, needs, and love. While these patterns can lead to repeated struggles, they also provide opportunities for healing. Through awareness, compassion, and supportive bonds, we can move toward earned secure attachment and create new patterns of intimacy.

# Daily Passage

Our earliest relationships shape us in ways that ripple throughout our lives. The bond between parent and child is where we first learn what love feels like, how safe it is to depend on others, and how to regulate our emotions. These lessons do not just stay in childhood. They follow us into adulthood, shaping how we show up in friendships, partnerships, and even in the workplace. Adult relationships often mirror the dynamics of the parent-child bond, not because we are stuck in the past, but because our nervous system remembers.

Attachment theory shows us that children learn safety and connection through the responsiveness of their caregivers (Bowlby, 1969). A baby who cries and is comforted learns that the world is reliable and relationships are safe. A baby whose cries go unanswered may learn that their needs are too much or that others cannot be trusted. These early lessons are not consciously remembered, yet they create patterns that guide how we give and receive love later on.

In adult relationships, these patterns often reappear. Someone who learned that closeness was met with comfort may feel at ease depending on a partner. Someone who learned that needs were met unpredictably may become anxious when a partner pulls away. Someone who learned that emotions were dismissed may feel safer keeping distance. These are not flaws but echoes of early adaptations.

The nervous system plays a central role in this mirroring. As children, our caregivers help regulate our stress through co-regulation. When we are scared, a parent’s touch calms us. When we are overwhelmed, a parent’s soothing voice helps us settle. Over time, these experiences teach the body how to regulate itself. If our caregivers struggled to provide this co-regulation, we may enter adulthood with fewer tools for soothing ourselves. This is why adult partners often find themselves pulled into the role of co-regulator for each other. A hug, a kind word, or simply being present can activate the same calming pathways that once came from a parent’s care.

This dynamic can feel deeply nourishing, but it can also stir frustration when old wounds are triggered. For example, if a partner turns away in a moment of need, it may echo the feeling of being left alone as a child. The body reacts as though the past is repeating, even when the present is different. Without awareness, these moments can spiral into conflict. With awareness, however, they become opportunities for healing. By naming what is happening: “This feels familiar, like when I wasn’t heard as a kid”, we can begin to separate past from present and invite compassion into the moment.

Importantly, the parent-child mirroring does not mean we are doomed to repeat old patterns forever. In fact, adult relationships can be powerful arenas of healing. Psychologist Sue Johnson (2008) describes how secure adult bonds can act as corrective experiences, teaching our nervous system new patterns of safety. When a partner responds with care where once there was neglect, or with steadiness where once there was chaos, the nervous system slowly learns a new story: love can be safe, needs can be met, and closeness can be trusted.

This is where the concept of earned secure attachment comes in. Even if we did not start life with secure bonds, we can develop them later through nurturing relationships and self-work (Roisman et al., 2002). Each time we experience connection that feels different from the past, we expand our capacity for intimacy. In this way, adult relationships not only mirror the parent-child bond but can also rewrite it.

Understanding this mirroring invites us to hold our relationships with compassion. When we or our loved ones react strongly and leave us puzzled, it may not just be about the present. It may also be about the past echoing in the nervous system. Recognizing this helps us respond with gentleness rather than blame. It also helps us bring awareness to our patterns and practice new ways of relating, moving gradually toward greater safety and trust.

# Alternative View

While early experiences are powerful, they are not the only factor shaping adult relationships. Culture, personality, and later life experiences also play significant roles. Focusing too heavily on childhood can risk oversimplifying the complexity of adult love.

# Activity

When do you notice yourself reacting in ways that feel bigger than the present situation?

How might your early caregiving experiences shape the way you respond in relationships today?

What moments of healing have you experienced in adult relationships that felt like a new story from your past?

How can you offer yourself compassion when old wounds are stirred?

Tool to create:

Attachment Style tool

# Sources

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# Day Title

Navigating Triggers and Old Patterns

# Lesson Name

Attachment, Love, and Belonging

# Meme

(insert meme image)

# Summary

Triggers arise when the nervous system links present moments with past wounds. By noticing bodily sensations, naming patterns, practicing low-stakes vulnerability, and balancing co-regulation with self-regulation, we can navigate triggers with awareness. Each small shift helps us break old cycles and move toward greater safety in relationships.

# Daily Passage

Relationships often bring us face-to-face with old wounds. A partner’s silence may remind us of times we felt ignored. A friend’s withdrawal may echo the pain of abandonment. These moments, called triggers, are not only about what is happening in the present. They are also the nervous system remembering the past. Learning to navigate triggers with awareness and care allows us to break free from repeating old patterns and create new ways of relating.

A trigger is a cue that sets off a strong emotional or bodily reaction. We may suddenly feel flooded with fear, anger, or shame, often out of proportion to the situation. Our body might tense, our chest may tighten, or our heart may race. These reactions are not random. They are protective strategies learned long ago, designed to keep us safe from hurt. The challenge is that they can lead us to respond in ways that damage connection in the present.

One way to begin working with triggers is through awareness of the body. When we notice sensations, like a knot in the stomach or shallow breathing, we can give ourselves the chance to pause before reacting. Instead of saying, “You never listen to me,” we can start with, “I feel a tightness in my chest right now.” This simple shift turns a reactive moment into an opportunity for connection. It helps us ground in the present rather than being pulled entirely into the past.

Another practice is to name the pattern that shows up. Many of us fall into familiar cycles when triggered. For example, one person may pursue, demanding closeness, while the other withdraws. Recognizing these patterns without blame helps both people see that the cycle is the problem, not either partner alone. Saying, “I notice I start to chase when I feel you pulling away,” invites awareness and breaks the hold of unconscious repetition.

It can also help to practice lower-stakes vulnerability in moments of triggering. Instead of revealing everything at once, we can name what is happening in simple terms: “This feels hard,” or, “I am struggling to put this into words.” These phrases communicate honesty without overwhelming either person. They create space for the other to respond with curiosity rather than defensiveness.

Triggers often activate younger parts of us, the parts that once had to silence needs or fight for attention. Bringing compassion to these parts is vital. Rather than shaming ourselves for being “too sensitive” or “too reactive,” we can ask, “What does this part of me need right now?” Sometimes it needs reassurance. Sometimes it needs space. Sometimes it simply needs to be acknowledged.

Partners can support one another by offering co-regulation. A gentle touch, a calm tone, or steady presence can help soothe a triggered nervous system. Yet it is not only the partner’s responsibility. Self-regulation practices, such as grounding the feet on the floor, slowing the breath, or placing a hand on the heart, help us return to safety within ourselves. Over time, this balance between co-regulation and self-regulation builds resilience.

While triggers often feel disruptive, they can also be gifts. They illuminate the places where healing is most needed and invite us to pay attention to the stories we still carry. A trigger is a signal, saying, “Here is a part of you that longs for care.” When met with curiosity rather than shame, triggers become doorways to deeper self-knowledge and intimacy. They show us the unfinished work of the heart and guide us toward greater freedom. In relationships, moments of triggering can even become opportunities for closeness. When two people approach a trigger with patience and compassion, they not only calm the nervous system but also deepen trust, learning that even difficult moments can be survived together.

Breaking old patterns takes patience. Triggers will not vanish overnight, and neither will the habits that come with them. But each time we notice, pause, and choose a new response, we create a small shift. These shifts add up, teaching the nervous system that the present can be different from the past. With compassion and practice, the grip of old wounds begins to loosen, making space for intimacy that feels freer and safer.

# Alternative View

While triggers are powerful teachers, not every strong reaction is about the past. Sometimes discomfort signals a genuine problem in the present. It is important to discern whether we are responding to old wounds or to a real boundary being crossed. Both deserve attention, though in different ways.

# Activity

What bodily sensations do you notice when you feel triggered?

What familiar patterns show up for you when you feel unsafe in relationships?

What is one phrase you could practice saying in the moment, such as “This feels hard” or “I feel tense”?

How can you support yourself when you notice a younger part of you has been activated?

Think of a recent trigger. What hidden gift might it have carried—what did it reveal about an old wound, a present boundary, or a deeper need for care?

NVC Triggers to Understanding Tool

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