

COMMUNICATION TOOL

UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY



Deciding you want responsibility for your feelings is one of the biggest changes you can make in your life. It means letting go of the fantasy that someone will do it for us.

Margaret Paul, PhD

UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY

staying out of triangle



- ✓ Trying to get others to understand why you feel or perceive something pulls you into complaining, defending, explaining (power-under) and conflict.
- ✓ Instead of explaining and expecting loved-ones to understand why you feel a certain way, work together to understand how you both can meet each others' needs, wants and limits. This is connecting, caring, and mutually empowering.
- ✓ Moreover, don't expect yourself to fully understand why someone is feeling the way they do! Not only is this impossible, it doesn't serve any value. What matters is understanding how you can provide comfort, help, guidance, etc., whatever is specifically needed.
- ✓ Sometimes we don't even know what we want or need! Talking it through with loved-ones can bring us clarity in what's needed to feel better, both present moment and long-term.
- ✓ If you are feeling calm and able, you can ask about giving advice or support. Make sure you don't give unsolicited criticism/help.
 - Do you want my support or ideas on how to help you through this? Or help us get through this?
 - What are your ideas on this?
 - I'd like to understand more.

UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY *staying out of triangle*



"You hurt my feelings."

TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHY

I'm so sorry. Why!? What did I do? (RESCUING)

It's the way you looked at me. Then you said something about my shirt, and yesterday you mentioned something about how the laundry wasn't folded.

>> See how this brought both people in the Drama Triangle blaming and explaining

UNDERSTAND HOW

Help me understand what you need from me or how you can feel better.

It's the way you looked at me. You look disgusted in me.

Ok, I appreciate you being honest. Let's talk more so I can understand how I can make sure you're feeling loved. You're so important to me.

>> See how this provides opportunity to connect outside of the Drama Triangle

UNDERSTAND HOW NOT WHY *staying out of triangle*



"I can't believe you're late again. I'm so mad!"

TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHY

This is ridiculous! Why would being two minutes late make you mad?
(POWER-OVER/CRITIC)

Because it happens over and over. You keep saying you'll be on time, but it hasn't happened once. You must not care about me at all.

>> See how this brought both people in the Drama Triangle blaming and explaining

UNDERSTAND HOW

This is the soonest I can be here since I leave work at 5pm. How can we get a better plan?

A better plan? What do you mean? I need you to be here exactly on time.

Help me understand how I can get here then when I leave my office at 5.

I guess I need to be ok with you being a little late. I get it now.

>> See how this provides opportunity to connect outside of the Drama Triangle