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7 WAYS TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR MATE'S
EMOTIONAL TRIGGER IS ACTIVATED



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Smart Couples Go Here.

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7 WAYS TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR MATE'S EMOTIONAL TRIGGER IS ACTIVATED

Everything seems to be going well between you. You're having a good day. Suddenly you say or do something rather benign and your spouse explodes or overreacts emotionally. You're wondering, "What just happened?"

Guess what? That outburst happened because you accidentally tripped your spouse's emotional trigger.

For a full explanation of what emotional triggers are and the different types you might encounter and experience yourself, listen to our All About We episode on [What to Do if You Tripped One of Your Partner's Emotional Triggers](#)

7 COMMON EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS THAT ACTIVATE IN COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS:

- ⦿ Abandonment – you will leave me or I cannot depend on you to be there for me when I need you.
- ⦿ Harm – your actions toward me are intended to hurt me emotionally or physically.
- ⦿ Guilt – you always think I am at fault and blame me.
- ⦿ Shame – you think I am bad in my core
- ⦿ Rejection – you don't think I am good enough
- ⦿ Anger – you want to control me and I won't let you.
- ⦿ Inadequacy – you criticize me because you don't think I measure up to your expectations/standards.

When you are in the midst of an emotional deluge, there are ways to handle the situation that won't make it worse. Sometimes when we react instead taking the time to *respond*, we can exacerbate the emotional high stakes. Here are...

7 WAYS TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR MATE'S EMOTIONAL TRIGGER IS ACTIVATED

Here are seven sequential steps you can take to respond to your spouse and effectively disarm the trigger.

1. **Do your best to stay calm.** A knee-jerk reaction is to return fire or get defensive. It will only make the matter worse. Your best move is to take deep breaths and find your calm.
2. **Do not be defensive.** Easier said than done, but done nonetheless it must be!
3. **Respond with a soft tone when you speak.** Rehearse in your mind how you want to speak your words. Get the tone right and you will lower the emotional intensity between you.
4. **Label and validate the emotional your spouse is expressing.** Labeling emotions helps neutralize them. "I can see you are upset right now..."
5. **Apologize for the "unintended harm" your actions caused.** You may think you didn't do anything wrong, why should you apologize. This is not a time to defend your actions. Empathy is what your spouse needs. "I am sorry that what I said/did upset you..."
6. **Clarify the intention of your actions.** Here is where you can address the accusation more effectively. "I did not mean to make you look bad. I was trying to help you solve the problem."
7. **Reassure your spouse that you care about him/her.** "I understand how you feel and want you to know that I love you and care about you."

BENEFITS

- Following these 7 steps will help you deal with an emotional trigger without losing your cool. Your spouse will feel safe.
- Here is another important outcome.
- The emotional wound begins to heal.
- It may not happen the first time. But the more you follow this approach the greater likelihood it won't happen as often.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Go through the list of emotional triggers. Can you identify your own? ([Use this article as a reference to unearth your own triggers.](#)) Which one(s) can you identify in your spouse.

If you found this guide useful, tell your friends. You can [forward them this link](#) or you can [tweet about it, here.](#)