

Appendix 1: Extra Help with the Four Skills of Intimate Conversations

If you're feeling tongue-tied, try the following suggestions.

Skill #1. Putting Your Feelings into Words

A lot of mixed emotions	Angry	Beautiful
Abandoned	Anguished	Belittled
Accepted	Annoyed	Betrayed
Affectionate	Apathetic	Bitter
Afraid	Appreciated	Boastful
Agitated	Appreciative of you	Calm
Alarmed	Apprehensive	Close to you
Alienated	Astounded	Clumsy, awkward
Alone	Baffled	Comfortable
Ambivalent	Bashful	Concerned
Amused	Battered	Connected
Contemplative	Joyful	Resentful
Critical	Like a failure	Restless
Depressed	Like an innocent victim	Righteously indignant
Disgusted	Like apologizing	Romantic
Disliked	Like arguing	Sexy
Distant	Like everything is falling apart	Shameful
Exhausted		Shocked
Exhilarated	Like hitting something	Shy
Free	Like I have no energy	Successful
Handsome	Like I want to be	Surprised
Happy	belligerent	Tense
Horny	Like kicking something	Tired
Hungry	Liked	Tolerant
I am not sure how I feel	Lonely	Tranquil
I want to assert my rights	Loved	Unaccepted

In awe	Misunderstood	Unappreciated
In disbelief	Neglected	Unattractive
Inspired	Regretful	Uncomfortable
Insulted	Rejected	Understood
Irritable	Relaxed	Upset
Irritated	Relieved	

Skill #2: Asking Questions

1. What are you feeling?
2. What else are you feeling?
3. What do you need most here?
4. What do you really wish for?
5. How did this all evolve?
6. Who are the main characters in these feelings you're talking about?
7. What would you really like to say here, and to whom?
8. What are the feelings here you are afraid to even think about?
9. Do you have any mixed feelings? What are they?
10. What do you see as your choices?
11. What are the positive and negative aspects of each of your choices?
12. Do you think this has affected our relationship (or another relationship). If so, how?
13. Do you wish you could have done things differently? How so?
14. What are your obligations (or duties) here?
15. Do you have a choice to make? What is it?
16. What would you really like to ask of me?
17. What do your values tell you about all this?
18. Think of someone you really admire. What would he or she do and how would he or she view this situation?
19. Do these feelings and needs have any spiritual, moral, ethical, or religious meaning for you? What are they?
20. Is there anyone or anything you disapprove of here? Who or what?

21. Is there anything or anyone you admire here? Who or what?
22. Is there anything you've learned from this? What?
23. Who is going to be most affected here? How will they be affected? Why?
24. Does this remind you of anything else in your personal history? What?
25. What meaning does it have for you to bring this up now?
26. How does this affect your identity, your idea of yourself?
27. How does this situation touch you?
28. How does this situation change you?
29. How have you changed or how are you changing, and how has that affected this situation?
30. How did this all begin, what was the very start?
31. What's your major reaction or complaint here?
32. Who do you think is most at fault here?
33. How do you think things will be resolved in the next five years?
34. How do you *wish* things would be resolved in the next five years?
35. Pretend that you only had six months to live. What would be most important to you?
36. What are your goals here?
37. How are you thinking about how all of this fits into your life as a whole?
38. What, if anything, makes you angry here?
39. What are the "shoulds" here? (Like what should you take responsibility for?)
40. What is your biggest "turn off" here?
41. Are there parts of yourself that are in conflict? Which?

Skill #3: Probing Further

1. Tell me the story of that.
2. I want to know everything you're feeling.
3. Talk to me; I am listening.
4. Nothing is more important to me right now than listening to you.
5. We have lots of time to talk.
6. Tell me your major priorities here.
7. Tell me what you need right now.

8. Tell me what you think your choices are.
9. It's okay not to know what to do here, but what's your guess?
10. I think you're being very clear. Go on.
11. Tell me all of your feelings here.
12. Help me understand your feelings a little better here. Say more.
13. I think that you have already thought of some solutions. Tell me what they are.
14. Help me understand this situation from your point of view. What is most important to you?
15. Tell me what you're most concerned about.
16. Tell me more about how you are seeing this situation.
17. Talk about what the decision is that you think you have to make.
18. If you could change the attitude of one of the key people in this situation, talk about what you would do.

Skill #4: Expressing Empathy

1. You're making total sense.
2. I understand how you feel.
3. You must feel so hopeless.
4. I just feel such despair in you when you talk about this.
5. You're in a tough spot here.
6. I can see how painful this is.
7. The world needs to stop when you're in this much pain.
8. I wish you didn't have to go through this.
9. I'm on your side.
10. I wish I could have been with you.
11. Oh, wow, that sounds terrible.
12. You must feel so helpless.
13. It hurts me to hear that.
14. I support your position.
15. I totally agree with you.
16. You are feeling so trapped!
17. You are making total sense.
18. It sounds like you were really disgusted!

19. No wonder you're upset.
20. I'd feel the same way.
21. I think you're right.
22. You are in a lot of pain. I can feel it.
23. It would be great to be free of this.
24. That must have annoyed you.
25. That would make me mad, too.
26. That sounds infuriating.
27. That sounds very frustrating.
28. That is very scary.
29. Well, I agree with most of what you're saying.
30. I would have been disappointed by that, too.
31. That would have hurt my feelings, too.
32. That would make me sad, too.
33. POOR BABY!!!
34. Wow! That must have hurt.
35. Okay, I think I get it. So what you're feeling/thinking is . . .
36. So what you're saying is . . .
37. I would have trouble coping with that.
38. What I admire most about what you're doing is . . .
39. That would make me feel insecure.
40. That sounds a little frightening.