

Repair After a Difficult Moment

Couples communication and boundaries | Couples | 15 to 20 minutes

Make a specific repair attempt without demanding forgiveness.

A repair begins with naming your own behavior and listening to its impact. Choose a moment you are ready to take responsibility for. The other person decides whether, when, and how they want to respond.

Name the action plainly

Say what you did without a justification that shifts responsibility. "I interrupted you and raised my voice" is clearer than "I am sorry you got upset." You can discuss context later without using it to erase the impact.

Ask rather than presume

Try: "I can see that I made it harder for you to speak. What did that moment feel like for you?" If the person does not want to answer, respect that. Do not ask them to reassure you.

Link words to a change

Offer one action you can follow through on. Example: "At our next check-in, I will write down my response and wait until you finish." Repair is evaluated through behavior over time; an apology does not create an obligation to reconcile.

The behavior I take responsibility for

The impact I understand and what I still need to hear

My repair statement

The action I will practice and when I will review it