

Audio Track 20: Meeting Our Own Needs

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Try this: Meeting our own needs.

Let's begin by calling to mind a time when you needed something from your partner but didn't quite get it. A time that left you feeling angry or hurt in some way. Please choose something that was difficult enough that you could feel the emotions, but not something that was traumatic. Stay within your window of tolerance as best you can. Allowing yourself now to remember the situation in detail, who was there or wasn't there? What was said or wasn't said? What happened or didn't happen?

As you remember the situation, see if you can identify the feelings that arose for you. Some feelings, such as anger, form a protective layer. If anger is present, you might validate your anger, perhaps saying to yourself, "Of course you're angry. Anyone would feel angry in that situation." Or whatever feels right to you. The point is not to reinforce the storyline, it's to acknowledge and accept the feeling that you're having. Underneath that protective layer, there is often a softer, more vulnerable layer. Here you may feel something like sadness, embarrassment or shame, disappointment, loneliness. See what it is for you.

And as you identify these softer, more vulnerable feelings, see if you can find the strongest feeling. Naming the feeling can be very helpful, perhaps saying to yourself with kindness and understanding something like, "Loneliness, of course you're feeling lonely." Or, "Rejection, yes,

it does feel like rejection." Underneath the vulnerable feeling, there's often an unmet need. This would be a universal human need that by virtue of being human, everybody needs. Maybe that's the need to be loved, to be seen or connected, or to be accepted, for example. See if you can identify what the need is for you.

And as best you can, try offering yourself what you need. Perhaps saying to yourself, "I see you," if you need to be seen, for example. Or if you need to belong, you might say, "I care about you. You matter to me." Or if you need to feel loved and accepted, perhaps saying something like, "I love you just as you are." See what it is for you. And then continue offering yourself your own kindness, as long as you need. Stay here for as long as you like.

And when you feel done, taking a moment to notice any effects of this practice. And remember to thank yourself for showing up, for taking good care of yourself, for caring about you.

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