What to Say When Your Partner is Triggered

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| Avoid saying | Try instead | Overall Tips |
| I thought you were over this already! (invalidation) | I will do whatever it takes to make it up to you. | Apologize often without making excuses (especially in the first two years). |
| I’ve said I’m sorry and I don’t know what else you want me to say (defensiveness) | I was wrong and I deeply regret hurting you. | End all ties with affair partners and set boundaries with competing attachments. |
| Don’t you think you’re overreacting? (minimization) | I don’t blame you for how you’re feeling. | Be open and honest in a non-defensive manner. |
| You’ve hurt me too! (defensiveness and blame) | I feel horrible for how badly I’ve hurt you. | It may be tempting to leave the situation, but moving toward them and offering physical comfort can be very healing. If your partner asks for space, honor their request, but check in with him/her after 10-15 minutes. |
| If you can’t get over this then maybe we shouldn’t be together. (threats to the relationship safety) | I love you, and I never want you to be hurt like that again. | Share information with partner that could be seen as threatening (e.g., unsolicited texts from affair partner) |
| I’m sorry if I hurt you for whatever reason I did. (insincere apology) | Let me try to understand the hurt I’ve caused you. Can you tell me what it’s been like for you? | Try to let any verbal attacks go and focus on your partner’s feelings. Often the betrayed is very hurt and anger is an expression of that hurt. |