

Expert Relationship Advice: Comforting Your Partner During Arguments



By Jared Sais

It's inevitable that you'll endure rough patches in your relationship and love, and maintaining a loving and committed attitude during them will help strengthen your bond. If you want to comfort your significant other but aren't sure what to do, consider these six pieces of non-verbal expert relationship advice:

Dating Expert Reveals How to Play Nice During Arguments

1. Pay attention to your tone and pitch: It's not what you say but *how you say it*. As a dating expert, I remind my clients of this truth often! We've all heard it before, and during an argument, it absolutely rings true. Which one sounds better? "You have been so self-absorbed – it has been driving me nuts" or "I feel that you have been very busy lately and haven't been taking the time to consider me and my feelings..." Even though both statements make the same point, your partner will react to the first one very differently than the second one. The first statement is harsh and accusatory, while the second statement permits more empathy and discussion.

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Instead of screaming an impulsive negative thought, take a deep breath and, in a calm manner, state how you've been feeling. Be completely honest, but imagine how *you* would want to be confronted if the issue were directed at you. It is often helpful to initiate the conversation by stating, "This is how I feel" or even just "I feel..."

Telling your significant other how you feel rather than yelling "You are an idiot!" allows them to understand you're not accusing them or playing the "I'm right, and you're wrong" game. Instead, you're merely revealing your feelings. Your perspective on an issue is your reality, but it may not be your partner's. By beginning the conversation in a mature way, you're bravely setting the stage for a constructive argument. The issue can then be resolved quickly and often without any harm to the relationship and love.

My love advice below breaks this idea down even more. Here are some tips to consider:

- Use a calm, conversational voice. I know the urge to yell and shout is there, but hold it back.
- Use phrases like, “I hear what you are saying” or “ I’m trying to see it from your perspective” and actually mean them. Try to understand what your partner is feeling.
- Alternate voicing your feelings and opinions. Both of you talking at once will eventually lead to yelling.
- Limit sarcasm, as it is the lowest form of humor. Also, refrain from phrases like, “What’s wrong with you?” and “Are you feeling okay?” Those comments tend to initiate a steamy cycle of anger.
- Don’t talk down to your partner. You are clearly with that person for a reason, and you’re not their superior.
- Be genuine and honest in regards to how you feel.

2. Limit the defensive body language: Arguments will happen, regardless of how perfect your relationship is. The most important thing for you to do is say what’s really bothering you, which is sometimes more difficult than it seems due to the nature of your feelings. It may be uncomfortable, embarrassing, or just anger you too much!

Having closed-off body language will make the difficult topic even more stressful to discuss and thus slow the mending process. Unresolved issues will linger and likely come back to haunt the relationship. Here are the dos and don’ts of keeping your body language open:

- Don’t fold or cross your arms. You’re not a body guard or a bouncer at a club trying to portray intimidation.
- Do talk with your hands and leave your arms open or to the sides of your body. This stance promotes the impression of open-mindedness and flexibility. People like to be heard and understood.

- Don't point at your partner. It adds a sense of guilt and makes the other person feel uncomfortable.
- Do keep a normal distance (each couple has their own normal distance), and don't tilt your body away or leave.
- Don't turn away from your partner. Face the person speaking, as it shows respect and that you're listening to what they're saying. You may not agree with their statements, but if you want to be heard, you have to listen.

3. Make direct eye contact: Eye contact is of prime importance when discussing a difficult topic or trying to resolve an argument. It's not constant, as too much can be awkward and uncomfortable, but consistent eye contact should be made throughout the conversation. It displays confidence, maturity, and trust. More than just being common courtesy, looking into someone's eyes when they're speaking shows that you're paying attention to what they're saying and that you care about how they feel. These are all necessary features to civilly talk through a difficult situation.

Whatever you do, don't roll your eyes or look away too much. I understand it can be uncomfortable to see your partner upset, but as a mature adult, you need to confront the issue, eyes on.

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4. Limit the use of angry body language: Similar to the importance of having open body language, limiting angry body language will help solve the problem at hand. Anger is easily seen without a word or grunt. Once it's detected, it's contagious – and that's one wild fire you need to put out.

Angry body language is displayed most commonly by these three non-verbal cues:

- Closed fist(s).

- A facial expression of anger, which includes pinched lips, death eyes or a strong glare, and lowering of eyebrows.
- Hitting. If you or your partner hits the wall or an object, stop what you're doing. Take a deep breath and start the conversation again after both of you regain your composure.

5. Recognize the non-verbal sign for “stop”: Look out for this very important non-verbal cue. It's the stop sign, a flat palm with straight fingers stretched out. This cue might be shown in front of the person's chest or at the side of the person's hip. Wherever it is, it means one thing: Stop what you're doing right now! No matter what you're doing or saying, if you see this non-verbal cue, you need to walk away or leave the room. Return only if you and the other person can calmly discuss the problem at hand. This “stop” sign, alternated with tight closed fists, is the strongest clue that you need to regroup.

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6. Seek help when needed: There's no harm in asking for help! After all, being honest with yourself about your relationship and love is key to a happy ending. A therapist is a wonderful way to maintain a healthy environment when discussing an important issue. Sometimes, a problem is deeper than it seems, and help from a professional may be the best way to resolve it.

[Jared Sais](#) is the co-author of the website [The Non-Verbal Game](#), where you can find free downloadable content. He is a dating expert in non-verbal communication, who specializes in body language, micro-expressions, and lie deception as they relate to relationships and love.