

Contents

PART 1 MICRO-SKILLS WORKOUTS

Empathic Attunement	2
EFCT Empathic Attunement Workout: Wayne and Jessica, Racial Danger Twins Relationship Fear	2
EFCT Empathic Attunement Workout: Wayne and Jessica, Perceived as a Weapon	4
Empathic Reflection	5
EFCT Empathic Reflection Workout: José and Phoebe, Unclear Pattern	5
EFCT Empathic Reflection Workout: Michael and Jamal, Discovering a Different Partner	7
EFIT Empathic Reflecting Workout: Sahra, Childhood Trauma	8
EFIT Empathic Reflection Workout: Sahra, Sitting Taller	10
Evocative Micro-Skills	12
Micro-Skills to Evoke Specificity and Granularity, Introduction	12
EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity and Granularity with André and Joelle about a Moment That Changed Everything	13
EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity, Granularity with Abbie and Ben, under Racial and Attachment Threats	15
EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking to Find Focus, Coherence, and Goals with Kendall and Beth, Beginning Therapy	16
EFIT Evocative Workout: Expanding and Creating Coherence with Olivia	17
EFIT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity and Granularity with Beau	21
EFIT Evocative Workout: Evoking a Focus and Goals with Aleid, Beginning Therapy	22
Validation	23
EFCT Validation Workout: Jordan and Olive, Validating to Contain Escalation	23
EFCT Validation Workout: Ray and Anjie, Validating Meanings Made in Their Repetitive Pattern	26
EFIT Validation Workout: Validating Justin for His Pace and Courage during an Imaginal Encounter	28

Heightening	29
EFCT Heightening Workout: Wayne and Jessica Treading Carefully to Avoid Hurt	29
EFIT Heightening Workout: Olivia, Celebrating a New Position	31
Therapist Transparency	32
EFCT Therapist Transparency Workout: Transparency about the Therapy Process with Elliott and Emma	32
EFIT Therapist Transparency Workout: Checking Accuracy of a Conjecture with Sam	34
Empathic Conjectures	36
EFCT Empathic Conjecture Workout: Kat and Sal, A Withdrawer's Fear on the Leading Edge	36
EFCT Empathic Conjecture Workout: Jordan and Olive, Looking for an Opening in the Briar Patch	38
EFIT Empathic Conjecture: When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Fritz	40
EFIT Empathic Conjecture: When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Joy	43
Reframing	45
EFCT Reframing Workout: Dick and Jane, Caught in a Pattern of Broken Trust	45
EFIT Reframing Workout: Alexandria, Reframing Grief and Anger	47
Catching Bullets	49
EFCT Catching Bullet Workout: Jamal and Abbie, During a Vulnerable Disclosure	49
Catching Bullets Workout When Therapist Makes a Misstep	51
Seeding Attachment	52
EFCT Seeding Attachment Workout: Creating an Image of Attachment Injury Repair with Neve and Dominic	52
EFIT Seeding Attachment Workout: Luca, Isolating and Withdrawing	55

PART 2.2 SUPPORT MATERIAL

EFCT Tango Workouts with Mei-Ling and Aki: Narrative Preview	58
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Part 1

Micro-Skill Workouts

Table of Contents

Empathic Attunement	2
EFCT Empathic Attunement Workouts	
<i>Wayne and Jessica, Racial Danger Twins Relationship Fear</i>	
<i>Wayne and Jessica, Perceived as a Weapon</i>	
Empathic Reflection	5
EFCT Empathic Reflection Workouts	
<i>José and Phoebe, Unclear Pattern</i>	
<i>Michael and Jamal, Discovering a Different Partner</i>	
EFIT Empathic Reflecting Workouts	
<i>Sahra, Childhood Trauma</i>	
<i>Sahra, Sitting Taller</i>	
Evocative Micro-Skills	12
Micro-Skills to Evoke Specificity and Granularity, Introduction	
EFCT Evocative Workouts	
<i>Evoking Specificity and Granularity with André and Joelle about a Moment That Changed Everything</i>	
<i>Evoking Specificity, Granularity with Abbie and Ben, under Racial and Attachment Threats</i>	
<i>Evoking to Find Focus, Coherence, and Goals with Kendall and Beth, Beginning Therapy</i>	
EFIT Evocative Workouts	
<i>Expanding and Creating Coherence with Olivia</i>	
<i>Evoking Specificity and Granularity with Beau</i>	
<i>Evoking a Focus and Goals with Aleid, Beginning Therapy</i>	
Validation	23
EFCT Validation Workouts	
<i>Jordan and Olive, Validating to Contain Escalation</i>	
<i>Ray and Anjie, Validating Meanings Made in Their Repetitive Pattern</i>	
EFIT Validation Workout: Validating Justin for His Pace and Courage during an Imaginal Encounter	

Heightening	29
EFCT Heightening Workout: Wayne and Jessica Treading Carefully to Avoid Hurt	
EFIT Heightening Workout: Olivia, Celebrating a New Position	
Therapist Transparency	32
EFCT Therapist Transparency Workout: Transparency about the Therapy Process with Elliott and Emma	
EFIT Therapist Transparency Workout: Checking Accuracy of a Conjecture with Sam	
Empathic Conjectures	36
EFCT Empathic Conjecture Workouts	
<i>Kat and Sal, A Withdrawer's Fear on the Leading Edge</i>	
<i>Jordan and Olive, Looking for an Opening in the Briar Patch</i>	
EFIT Empathic Conjecture	
<i>When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Fritz</i>	
<i>When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Joy</i>	
Reframing	45
EFCT Reframing Workout: Dick and Jane, Caught in a Pattern of Broken Trust	
EFIT Reframing Workout: Alexandria, Reframing Grief and Anger	
Catching Bullets	49
EFCT Catching Bullet Workouts	
<i>Jamal and Abbie, During a Vulnerable Disclosure</i>	
<i>Catching Bullets Workout When Therapist Makes a Misstep</i>	
Seeding Attachment	52
EFCT Seeding Attachment Workout: Creating an Image of Attachment Injury Repair with Neve and Dominic	
EFIT Seeding Attachment Workout: Luca, Isolating and Withdrawing	

Empathic Attunement

EFCT Empathic Attunement Workout: Wayne and Jessica, Racial Danger Twins Relationship Fear

Context

Wayne, a Black man, and Jessica, a lighter-skinned woman both downregulate quite a lot in self-protection mode. At times they have a withdraw-withdraw pattern. At other times one or the other pushes their partner to be more open. Jessica longs for Wayne to open up more with her. Previously they have discussed a video that Wayne shared that speaks of African American men knocking on a door and then taking a few steps back to be sure they are in full view – so they don't get hit in the crossfire.

WAYNE: My fear is ultimately triggering a fear response or a harm response in you in which you will overreact and respond in a way that will cause harm to both of us...harm to our relationship as a whole and everything we have tried to build up.

JESSICA: Hmmm, (pauses) that doesn't feel good. It feels like you are making it my fault. That I will be the one to make the relationship fail.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify an emotional handle (verbal phrase or image or non-verbal signal) that strikes you as the most poignant part of the client's message. Wayne: _____ Jessica: _____
2. Resonate with these emotional handles and observe your internal reactions (your body, thoughts, feelings, and impulses to action). What are they? _____
3. Do your reactions pull you close to the client or pull you away from the client? _____
4. Curbing your readiness to assume you *fully* understand, identify an item of empathic curiosity that you have that could help you to enter more fully into the client's world: _____

After inserting your authentic attunement responses, compare your responses to Emily's below and see if you discover any ways to deepen your own attunement and empathic curiosity without the pressure to formulate any words for the client. Your attunement may be similar to Emily's responses below or it may be very different – either is ok. The goal here is to deepen your awareness of your emotional felt sense (inner bodily, cognitive, affective, relational, and curiosity).

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Emotional handles
Wayne: Fear, triggering a harm response in Jessica.
Jessica: "Hmmm" – Jessica pause as she listens to Wayne; making it my fault!
2. Internal resonance
Body: Emily's heart expands as Wayne discloses with such vulnerability. She cringes at his words "overreact" feeling defensive of Jessica.
Meaning: Wayne has just been so very open in his disclosure, yet Jessica is taking it as faulting her. Jessica also seems interested and may be missing Wayne's point; Wayne may not be blaming Jessica, merely expressing his fear of everything being destroyed if he makes the wrong move.
Action tendency: Drawn to applaud Wayne for his vulnerability and openness; drawn to protect Jessica from feeling blamed.
3. Emily feels pulled close to each partner, in different ways.
4. Curbing her tendency to assume she understands the fear Wayne is sharing, she wants to hear more about his fear of triggering a harm response in Jessica.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your responses to Emily's. Make some notes of what you like about your attunement and empathic curiosity and any discoveries you are making about how you could sharpen your own empathic attunement and curiosity prior to formulating any words for the client.

EFCT Empathic Attunement Workout: Wayne and Jessica, Perceived as a Weapon

Context

Wayne and Jessica continue from the above workout.

Client Expression

Read the clients' expressions below out loud as though you were them. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement.

- WAYNE:** My experience with the world and carrying myself through it is that my physical form is perceived as one that has to be constantly managed and kept from exploding and looked at as a weapon, so I constantly struggle with trying to minimize my behaviors, my physical presence and attention coming my way. Try not to do too much, stand out too much, try not to appear threatening or trying not to – – (pauses) – – appear!
- JESSICA:** (Face softens, and she turns towards Wayne) I get it.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify an emotional handle (verbal phrase or image or non-verbal signal) that strikes you as the most poignant part of the client's message. Wayne: _____ Jessica: _____
2. Resonate with these emotional handles and observe your internal reactions (your body, thoughts, feelings, and impulses to action). What are they? _____

3. Do your reactions pull you close to the clients or pull you away from them? _____
4. Curbing your readiness to assume you *fully* understand, identify an item of empathic curiosity that you have that could help you to enter more fully into their world: _____

After inserting your authentic attunement responses, compare your responses to Emily's below and see if you discover any ways to deepen your own attunement and empathic curiosity without the pressure to formulate any words for the client. Your attunement may be similar to Emily's responses below or it may be very different – either is ok. The goal here is to deepen your awareness of your emotional felt sense (inner bodily, cognitive, affective, relational, and curiosity).

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Emotional handles Emily identifies
Wayne: "my physical form is perceived as one that has to be managed;" "looked at as a weapon;" "minimize my behaviors;" "try not to appear;"
Jessica: soft face – leaning toward Wayne.
2. Internal resonance
Body: Emily's heart feels heaviness, grief, and outrage at the injustice Wayne discloses so openly. She cringes at his image of being "perceived as a weapon" and "trying not to appear." Her body calms as she sees Jessica's softness toward him.

Meaning: Wayne's vulnerable, formulation of his survival experience in the world helps Emily understand a little more of his fear of triggering a reaction in Jessica that will end up hurting. She senses that Jessica is able to hear this as Wayne's real experience without feeling judged and getting reactive.

Action tendency: Respect Wayne for his open honesty and wanting to validate his experience of danger in the world for simply being himself and curious to learn more about how this dynamic and caution plays out with Jessica; feeling humbled to be part of his honest sharing. Wanting to validate Jessica's apparent interest to learn more.

3. Emily feels pulled close to each partner, in different ways.
4. Curbing her tendency to assume she can fully understand his experience, Emily is curious to learn more about Wayne's sense of fear and danger in the world and with Jessica.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your responses to Emily's. Make some notes of what you like about your attunement and empathic curiosity and any discoveries you are making about how you could sharpen your own empathic attunement and curiosity prior to formulating any words for the client.

Empathic Reflection

EFCT Empathic Reflection Workout: José and Phoebe, Unclear Pattern

Context

José made the initial appointment for himself and his wife, Phoebe, saying they were having some dark times. It is not clear yet if José is in distress because Phoebe seems to be distancing from him or if he is guarded and ambivalent about the relationship. Both partners are saying, "Things aren't that bad – but something has changed, and it seems that we need help."

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic reflection.

Phoebe: (Sadness on her face, with a big sigh, as though defeated.) We just don't communicate the same as we once did. We don't ever talk about things anymore.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. *Attune/Limitations:* Imaginatively step into the world of another. Do you have limitations to your attunement? If so, what are they?
-
2. *Emotional/cultural handle:* Identify the most poignant *emotional/cultural* handle and/or hints of threat to which you attune:
-

3. Resonate: How do you resonate in your own body with the most poignant part of the story?

Your Empathic Reflection

Create an empathic reflection, using words from the emotional handle you have chosen and your own bodily-felt resonance. Communicate your understanding of the client's experience with tentativeness, to invite the client, verbally or with tone of voice, to confirm or adjust:

After inserting your empathic reflection, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

Attune: Emily imaginatively steps into the world of José and Phoebe, sensing the following limitations: Not knowing their pattern of interaction. Who pursues, who withdraws? Not knowing if Phoebe is distressed that José does not respond to her or if she is distressed about not knowing how to share with him or not wanting to share with him. She has more questions than answers. She knows her own experience of a broken relationship but realizes that this disconnection Phoebe is describing could feel very different for them than what she has lived. She also realizes each partner is likely to experience it quite differently from each other.

Emotional handle: Emily chooses these words as the most poignant *emotional handle*: *We once communicated; don't ever talk*, along with the sad face and sigh from Phoebe, and José's image of "dark times" when he made the appointment. To Emily, this conveys an attachment threat of disconnection. A threat of losing each other.

Resonating with that handle, Emily feels in her heart, a heaviness and an ache for something more. Emily's felt sense of the client's non-verbal, contextual, and verbal message is a sense of loss.

Emily's Empathic Reflection

EMILY: You remember when things were different – when you were able to connect better than now. You sound very disappointed that you aren't talking with each other like you once did. (With inflection, inviting confirmation that this reflection fits.) Yes?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic reflection with Emily's. Your responses may be similar or very different from hers and that is ok.

Now make a note of your strengths at empathic reflecting that you want to celebrate and/or a note of what you may want to add to your practice. The important thing is to experiment with attuning and resonating to get a felt sense of the client's experience and from that resonance to find words to communicate accurate empathic understanding with tentativeness and by inviting the client's response. How did you communicate with tentativeness to invite the client to confirm or adjust your communicated understanding?

Your efforts at attuning and communicating your understanding with tentativeness help clients get a *felt sense* of the message they have sent and to feel safe to further explore their experience.

EFCT Empathic Reflection Workout: Michael and Jamal, Discovering a Different Partner

Context

Michael and Jamal are a gay couple who have struggled with Michael's increasing distancing from Jamal with his gambling activities for several years. Jamal has never heard from Michael before that he longs to be more open with him but since Michael began attending his gambling recovery group, Jamal is discovering a "new partner."

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic reflection.

JAMAL: It's good to hear he wants to be kind and open with me (a bright, look of surprise). I had no idea the intention was even there because all I have been hearing from him is spite and hurt or nothing at all. Walking on eggshells is very tiring. I am very cautious but hopeful to hear that he wants to be more open and kind!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune/Limitations: Imaginatively step into the world of another. Do you have limitations to your attunement? If so, what are they? _____

2. *Emotional/cultural* handle: Identify the most poignant *emotional/cultural* handle and/or hints of threat to which you attune: _____

3. Resonate: How do you resonate in your own body with the most poignant part of the story?

Your Empathic Reflection

Create an empathic reflection, using words from the emotional handle you have chosen and your own bodily-felt resonance. Communicate your understanding of the client's experience with tentativeness, to invite the client, verbally or with tone of voice, to confirm or adjust:

After inserting your empathic reflection, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

Attune: Emily imaginatively steps into Jamal's world, sensing the following limitation: She doesn't know how strong his caution is at this time, how rigid their pattern has become. She doesn't know whether the "eggshells" are primarily Jamal's fear of Michael withdrawing or of him getting spiteful. Either way, she senses the attachment threat of a partner who does not feel safe.

Emotional handle: Emily chooses these words "good to hear he wants to be kind and open with me" combined with his bright look of surprise, as the most poignant *emotional handle*:

Resonating with that handle, Emily feels a leap of hope in her stomach and a cautious hopefulness and longing for Michael's kindness and openness.

Emily's Empathic Reflection

EMILY: Your face brightens with hope and surprise. Almost like this is the amazing thing you have been longing for – for Michael to be kind and open with you – and yet it is so new, you feel caution as well, yes? Almost like you are wondering, "Could this be real?"

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic reflection with Emily's. Your responses may be similar or very different from hers and that is ok.

Now make a note of your strengths at empathic reflecting that you want to celebrate and/or a note of what you may want to add to your practice. The important thing is to experiment with attuning and resonating to get a felt sense of the client's experience and from that resonance to find words to communicate accurate empathic understanding with tentativeness and by inviting the client's response. How did you communicate with tentativeness to invite the client to confirm or adjust your communicated understanding?

Your efforts at attuning and communicating your understanding with tentativeness help clients get a *felt sense* of the message they have sent and to feel safe to further explore their experience.

EFIT Empathic Reflecting Workout: Sahra, Childhood Trauma

Context

Sahra, born to a Ukrainian mother and a Somali father, identifies as an Afro-Ukrainian immigrant to the United States. She is a medical resident and a single parent of a two-year-old daughter. She has a self-protective pattern of fluctuating between anxiety and numbing. She has survived childhood trauma, the loss of her father when he left the family and returned to Somalia, and she was deeply troubled she could not convince her mother to leave Ukraine and come to the

United States with her. In this session, she is exploring a parental childhood attachment injury from her father.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic reflection.

SAHRA: There is pain, and it's, you know, terror really. And, and I would say that, um... It's really intense, in a way. It's like a startling moment that never goes away. I was just a little girl; frightened from a bad dream. My mom was away studying and I crept into my dad's room, hoping I could just crawl in with him. He got angry – slapped me across the face and told me to get back to my room! Humiliating! (Cringing; looks down, tears streaming down her face. Suddenly looks at Emily.) How dare he!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune/Limitations: Imaginatively step into the world of another. Do you have limitations to your attunement? If so, what are they? _____
2. *Emotional/cultural* handle: Identify the most poignant *emotional/cultural* handle and/or hints of attachment/cultural threat or safety: _____
3. Resonate: How do you resonate in your own body with the most poignant part of the story? _____

Your Empathic Reflection

Create an empathic reflection, combining words from the emotional handle you have chosen and your own bodily-felt resonance. Communicate your understanding of the client's experience with tentativeness, verbally or with tone of voice, to invite the client to confirm or adjust your understanding:

After inserting your empathic reflection, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune/Limitations: Although there are many cultural differences between Emily and Sahra's lives, Emily feels immediately struck with the anguish and shock of a little girl in need of protection, expecting comfort from her father but getting slapped and rejected. She sees how it is alive for Sahra, in this moment, as though it had just happened yesterday, and she also hears the outrage she feels toward her father, in, "How dare he!"
2. *Emotional/cultural* handle: Emily identifies the most poignant *emotional* handle in Sahra's response to this scenario in her words. "*How dare he!*" *I was frightened – hoped to crawl in – expected safety – got slapped. How dare he!*

3. Resonate: Emily resonates in her body with the outrage or indignation that Sahra feels toward her father for so badly shattering the trust of her vulnerable little girl self. She resonates with Sahra's sense of brokenness and her sense of indignation at how wrong this was!

Emily's Empathic Reflection

Read Emily's reflection aloud to get a felt sense of her words and her vocal resonance.

EMILY: So shattering to see your little girl self, frightened and needing comfort, deserving comfort, expecting your father to make it safe for you, yet so suddenly, turn against you and terrify you more. Here we are together seeing that beautiful little Sahra survive that shattering moment and saying to ourselves, "How could he do that?" You see that you deserved his protection, not his slap. Am I getting it?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic reflection with Emily's. Your responses may be similar or very different from hers and that is ok.

How did you communicate with tentativeness to invite the client to confirm or adjust your communicated understanding?

The important thing is to experiment with attuning and resonating to get a felt sense of the client's experience and from that resonance to find words to communicate accurate empathic understanding with tentativeness and by inviting the client's response. Your efforts at attuning and communicating your understanding with tentativeness help clients get a *felt sense* of the message they have sent and to feel safe to further explore their experience.

Now make a note of your strengths at empathic reflecting that you want to celebrate and/or a note of what you may want to add to your practice.

EFIT Empathic Reflection Workout: Sahra, Sitting Taller

Context

Sahra from the previous workout has addressed an imaginal father in session. She was very much in touch with the indignation of how wrong her father was, to violate her and shatter her trust and she expressed that to him. As she told him that nothing ever made it ok to strike her innocent little frightened self, who was counting on his protection, she began to sit taller. She described her sense that her father began to diminish in size and began to crumble in shame. She described a shift in her chest and peace in her heart. She heard her adult-sounding voice addressing him and confidently setting this crumbling-in-shame father at a safe distance.

After processing that encounter together with Emily, Sahra said,

Now I want to go to little Sahra, sobbing alone in her bed and assure her that she is safe. I want to let her know that I see she is so frightened – how horrible and wrong this was of him, and that she is beautiful and precious and only deserving of safety and comfort.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic reflection.

Client Statement

SAHRA: I know that little girl's life will not be easy. I know she will have lots of grief and struggles until she gets to be my age today, but something changed for me here. I've always felt tinges of that humiliation and shame. Addressing my imaginal father shifted something in my core! (Pointing at her heart; sitting taller.) He was wrong! I deserve to be safe and protected! I feel so powerful that I could tell him in my imagination and see him shrink away. (Her voice is clear and strong, calm and slow.)

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune/Limitations: Imaginatively step into the world of another. Do you have limitations to your attunement? If so, what are they? _____

2. *Emotional/cultural* handle: Identify the most poignant *emotional/cultural* handle and/or hints of attachment/cultural threat or safety: _____

3. Resonate: How do you resonate in your own body with the most poignant part of the story? _____

Your Empathic Reflection

Create an empathic reflection, combining words from the emotional handle you have chosen and your own bodily-felt resonance. Communicate your understanding of the client's experience with tentativeness, to invite the client, verbally or with tone of voice, to confirm or adjust:

After inserting your empathic reflection, read it aloud. Compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune/Limitations: Emily attunes to Sahra's declaration of an experienced shift. She hears a shift in her voice of a new strength and confidence, even as she says, "I know her life will not be easy." She knows she is limited to fully grasping how much these encounters have shifted Sahra's internal experience and she has much empathic curiosity to understand more and to savor it with her.

2. *Emotional/cultural* handle: For Emily, the most poignant *emotional handle* that strikes her is this new sense of safety she hears in her tone of voice as Sahra says, “I feel so powerful.” She hears a safety that comes with Sahra’s evolving coherence that despite the struggles and danger this little girl self will experience in her life, she is feeling safer and clearer about her worth and deserving of safety.
3. *Resonate*: Emily resonates with a sense of strength in her body and finds herself sitting taller just as Sahra is.

Emily’s Empathic Reflection

Read Emily’s reflection aloud to get a felt sense of her words and her vocal resonance.

EMILY: (Adjusting her own body to also sit taller.) You are describing a powerful shift. You voice is strong and confident, and you are sitting taller. It sounds like your courage to address this image of your father and to tell him how wrong he was for hurting you in the moment you most needed his protection is lifting a cloud for you. (Continuing in proxy voice): It’s like I used to feel twinges of humility and such brokenness to have been treated like that, but now I know I deserved his protection. That I deserve protection and comfort, all the time, yes? Even when life is not so kind to me, yes?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic reflection with Emily’s. Your responses may be similar or very different from hers and that is ok.

How did you communicate with tentativeness to invite the client to confirm or adjust your communicated understanding?

The important thing is to experiment with attuning and resonating to get a felt sense of the client’s experience and from that resonance to find words to communicate accurate empathic understanding with tentativeness and by inviting the client’s response. Your efforts at attuning and communicating your understanding with tentativeness help clients get a *felt sense* of the message they have sent and to feel safe to further explore their experience.

Now make a note of your strengths at empathic reflecting that you want to celebrate and/or a note of what you may want to add to your practice.

Evocative Micro-Skills

Micro-Skills to Evoke Specificity and Granularity, Introduction

The next two workouts are directed more generally at evoking specificity and granularity, without all the elements of emotion. To fully understand a client and for a client to have increased coherence about their own experience, EFT therapists always want to elicit more specific, granular expressions. This is very useful in EFT Tango Move 1, while reflecting the present process. It is

easy for an EFT therapist to presume an understanding of what a client says, when frequently a more granular description of felt experience would be more empowering to the client and their relevant other in couple or family therapy and of course would enhance understanding between client and therapist.

EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity and Granularity with André and Joelle about a Moment That Changed Everything

Context

Pivotal moments need to be evoked and expanded in more specific, concrete, and granular ways and they can be easily missed by well-intentioned EFT therapists. Consider Joelle and André, a young heterosexual couple in an early session. They share two perspectives on pivotal moments that changed their relationship. André says, “I think everything changed in our relationship when the twins were born.” Joelle shakes her head in disagreement, “I think it was the fight we had last summer.” Looking at these comments in isolation, it is rather obvious that each partner has an important story and perspective to share. Sometimes in the rapid moments of becoming acquainted with a new client – couple or individual – it is easy to miss a subtle hint at something that was potentially cataclysmic, such as Joelle’s reference to a fight last summer. It is also easy to presume an understanding of how having children alters a relationship without stopping to hear *how specifically* it changed things for the couple from André’s perspective. Clients may drop a hint about a “pivotal moment that changed everything” and a therapist can easily miss it. It is important to evoke specifics about what was the life-changing moment. Or if the specific moment is mentioned, a therapist will want to evoke what specifically about the event was so pivotal or so shattering that everything changed.

Client Expression

Read the clients’ expressions below aloud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to create your own evocative response or question to invite more granularity.

ANDRÉ: Our relationship changed *after we had the twins*.

JOELLE: Everything changed after *the big fight we had last summer*.

Since the emotional handles are already selected (in italics) you can move through this workout fairly quickly, simply by selecting how you will evoke more specifics from each partner.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Identify something in the client’s expression that you feel would be helpful to expand or make more specific or more alive in the present moment. Something that is vague, obscure, general, abstract, impersonal, or past tense, for example. Note your internal resonance: _____

Your Evocative Response to Invite Elaboration

1. Reflect/repeat, the emotional salient emotional handle, for André: _____
for Joelle: _____

2. Choose one of the following evocative responses for André and one for Joelle or experiment with all three to invite elaboration:
 - i. pause to wait for the client to add more to your reflection
 - ii. invite the client to say more about the key element you repeated, or
 - iii. ask a question targeted at a specific element of emotion

Evoke:

André: _____

Joelle: _____

After inserting your evocative responses or questions, read them aloud, to get the feel of how evocative and specific it sounds. Do they invite the clients to say more, to expand their engagement?

Next, compare your responses with Emily's below to see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your EFT *way of being*.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

Emily is curious to evoke more about how André experiences things changed between them with the twins. She almost missed tuning into Joelle's comment about the fight last summer but then realized there must be a story of significance there.

Emily's Evocative Responses to Invite Elaboration. (First Reflects, then Evokes.)

Read Emily's responses aloud to get a feel for how evocative they sound:

1. Reflection: Emily reflects slowly, in proxy voice Joelle's words, "*the big fight we had last summer*," then pauses for her to say more about that experience.
2. Invitation to expand: Emily reflects André's words, "After we had kids," and adds, "Tell me more about how things changed for you after the kids."
She reflects Joelle's words and evokes, "Tell me what it was about the fight that changed everything."
3. Targeted Question to evoke:
One evocative reflection and response may be enough to help each partner become more specific and granular, however, Emily also draws on elements of emotion to evoke more specific from each partner.
To André
To evoke his *meaning-making*: What did it say to you about your importance to Joelle after the kids came along?
To evoke *action tendencies*: How specifically did things change between you and Joelle after the twins were born?
To evoke bodily-felt sense: What changed for you on the inside after the twins joined the family?
To Joelle:
To evoke her *meaning-making*: What did the fight say to you?
To evoke *action tendencies*: How did you and André begin to do things differently after the fight?
To evoke bodily-felt sense: How does that fight still feel alive in your body today?

After reading Emily's responses, compare your responses with hers and see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your style of using evocative micro-skills to expand.

Also, make a note of your evocative strengths. Your evocative micro-skills may be similar to Emily's responses or very different – either is ok. The goal here is to identify a key element a client has shared that feels too general or vague and that would be helpful to elaborate, and practice an EFT micro-skill to invite expansion. Insert your strengths and discoveries for integrating:

EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity, Granularity with Abbie and Ben, under Racial and Attachment Threats

Context

Abbie, a first-generation immigrant from Ethiopia and Ben, an American, met while Ben was working for an NGO in Ethiopia, under Abbie's supervision. They have been married for five years and living in the United States for the past two years.

Read the client's expression below aloud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to identify your inner attunement process and to create your own evocative response or question to invite elaboration on an element you feel needs more specificity.

Client Expression

ABBIE: Ben asked me to walk to the corner store to pick up some ice cream, a seemingly reasonable request. He was busy and I had the time, but when I said, "No way! I am not walking by those snooty white neighbors without you! You have no idea what I get from them!" he sneered at me! He said, "Don't let it bother you!"

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Identify something in the client's expression that you feel would be helpful to expand or make more specific or more alive in the present moment. Something that is vague, obscure, general, abstract, impersonal, or past tense, for example. Note your internal resonance: _____

Your evocative response to invite more specificity and more emotional depth or aliveness:

1. Reflect/repeat, the element you want to expand: _____
 2. Evoke elaboration
 - i. Repeat the client's words, pausing to invite elaboration _____
 - ii. Specifically invite the client to say more about the key element you repeated: _____
-
-

After inserting your evocative response or question, read it aloud, to get the feel of how evocative it sounds. Does it invite the client to make their experience more granular, more alive?

Next, compare your responses with Emily's below to see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your EFT *way of being*, particularly expanding a *cultural handle*.

Emily Inner Process and Attunement

Emily identifies the emotional/cultural handle: *He has no idea what I get from the snooty white neighbors.* Her stomach knots and she feels shame for the tyranny of whiteness; aware she cannot fully taste the world of discrimination the client lives daily; feels a strong desire to validate Abbie's experience even as Ben is minimizing it. She wants to evoke more about Abbie's experience of Ben minimizing her experiences of racial aggression.

She attunes to the following elements of Abbie's emotional experience:

Trigger: husband sneers as she tells him of her experiences of ongoing racial aggression;

Action tendency: refuse to walk in white neighborhoods and listen to racial aggression;

Body: voice sounds exasperated and defeated;

Meaning: he doesn't understand the racial aggression I experience.

Emily's Evocative Response

Read Emily's response aloud to get a feel for how evocative it sounds.

EMILY: Something so real and hurtful for you – and your husband tells you not to let it bother you! (Repeating core message.) Can you say more about what it is like for you to have Ben – the man you love and want to be safe with – downplay the racial aggression that you live within your own neighborhood?

Now make a note of what you want to add to your practice of inviting elaboration on a cultural doorway or make a note of your strengths to celebrate! _____

EFCT Evocative Workout: Evoking to Find Focus, Coherence, and Goals with Kendall and Beth, Beginning Therapy

The next workout focuses on evocative micro-skills to help clients find focus and formulate goals. Partners frequently arrive in therapy with different perspectives on their goals for change. Evoking specificity and clarity of longings and goals helps a therapist assess if a couple has compatible agendas.

To be warm, invitational, and focused, an EFT therapist seeks to elicit each partner's hope for therapy and to extend an invitation to share what they want the therapist to know about them. This is to build a collaborative relationship that centers clients' experience.

A new couple, Kendall and Beth enter an online therapy room.

KENDALL: (Barely seated – glances at the therapist.) Where do we begin?

Create an open invitation for clients to share what they want the therapist to know about them and to name their hopes and goals for therapy. To model safety and collaboration and a non-expert stance, try to create an evocative invitation without questions. If you prefer to ask a question –

experiment with both questions and non-questions, and examine which approach is more evocative and collaborative?

Insert your evocative response to evoke each partner's hopes for therapy: _____

After inserting your evocative response to elicit goals and hopes for therapy, above, compare it with Emily's response below. As always, this is not about being right or wrong. It is about practicing a very important EFT skill for finding focus and shaping goals.

Emily's Responses

"I'd like to hear from both of you about your hopes for our work together, or even what your hopes are for your relationship. So, either one of you could begin with giving us a sense of your hopes."

After the first partner shares, Emily turns to the other partner, reflecting what was shared as a part of evoking the their response.

Your partner mentions wanting to have less fighting and a more peaceful relationship. Can you tell me what comes up for you as you hear that. You may have a similar goal or perhaps your hopes for the relationship are quite different?

Strengths and Discovers about Evocative Responding

Can you identify anything about Emily's response that you may want to integrate into your style? Make a note of what you have discovered or a strength you have to celebrate.

EFIT Evocative Workout: Expanding and Creating Coherence with Olivia

Context

Olivia is a survivor of childhood trauma and the ongoing daily trauma of living in a country embroiled in a war. She lives with high anxiety, continual vigilance, and a startle reflex, fears for her young daughter's health problems, questions about her professional competence, combined with daily criticisms and pressures from her mother to be more religious, with messages that unless she goes to church regularly, God will punish her and that all her personal and family health concerns are God's punishment. At times she senses anger, as a *fire in her belly*, but most of the time she cannot access anger. She recalls an entire childhood of forced labor and punishment. Punishment was a daily occurrence as were messages she had no right to relax or to play or to have an idle moment. As a child, life was pure work. She was not permitted to play like the other children in her neighborhood.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Underline emotional handles and elements of emotion you might jot down if you were the therapist. Then

follow the prompts to identify your inner attunement process and to create your own evocative response or question to invite elaboration on an element you feel needs more specificity.

OLIVIA: (Speaking rapidly) Something is biting me slowly inside. I suffer this startle reflex all the time. I've known it all my life. I remember around 12 years my mother gave me a very difficult job to dig the very hard soil in the garden and after that I developed a severe inflammation of nerves. The doctor said it is possible for kids to have this disease after they are overloaded by work or very strong stress. And mother said, flippantly, "Oh she was digging in the garden," and I knew the way she said it, that the hard work would never stop! (Weeping.) No way to get her to back off. The doctor said my muscles were overworked from digging in the garden. The doctor who gave me the treatment injections, said I was very brave (voice chokes as she weeps) because they were extremely painful injections, but my mother said nothing. (Pause; stops weeping; looks up.) When I think about mother, I just go numb. (Exceeding window of tolerance.) It's not conscious. Not a choice.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Salience: Identify an emotional handle or element of emotion in the client's expression that you underlined and feel would be helpful to expand/make more specific – to focus and regulate the client. Note your internal resonance. _____

2. Identify explicit elements of emotion the client is conveying: _____

3. Identify something that is vague, obscure, general, abstract, impersonal, past tense, for example, that could be made more specific or expanded: _____

Your Evocative Responses to Invite Elaboration

1. Reflect/repeat, the salient element, emotional/cultural handle: _____
2. Choose one of the following evocative micro-skills or experiment with all three.
 - a. reflect and pause to wait for the client to add more to your reflection,
 - b. invite the client to say more about the key element you repeated, or
 - c. ask a question targeted at a specific element of emotion:

After inserting your evocative response or question, read it out loud, to get the feel of how evocative it sounds. Does it invite the client to make their experience more granular, more alive, more concrete or, in the case of needing to be contained, more manageable?

Next, compare your responses with Emily's below. Your evocative response or question may be similar to one of Emily's responses below or it may be very different – either is ok. The goal here is to practice joining with your clients where they are and focusing on what you want to expand to bring more coherence or engagement to their experience.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Salience: Emily identifies Olivia's phrase, "But my mother said nothing" during all this pain and neglect as the most striking expression.
2. Elements of emotion conveyed: Emily identifies the following elements of emotion and jots down these phrases:
Body: something is biting me slowly inside; startle reflex; constantly vigilant
Triggering images: self at 12 in pain; overworked; a kind doctor validating her bravery; a cruel and dismissive mother
Action tendency: go numb thinking of mother; weeping to recall the images.
Meanings: be careful all the time, something bad may happen; punishment is pending; mother will not back off; danger is always lurking.
3. Missing or vague elements of emotion: Emily notes that Olivia's core emotion remains vague. There is a sense of danger but the perceived danger is unclear.

Emily's Evocative Responses to Invite Elaboration

Reflection or repetition and pause, Option 1:

EMILY: "Something is biting me slowly inside." You just went numb, but can you connect again with that vague sense of something biting you slowly inside?

Reflection or repetition and pause, Option 2:

EMILY: (Reflecting slowly) The doctor saw that the 12-year-old was working too hard for a child and praised you for your bravery in receiving the injections. (Then pauses for the client to say more about that experience.)

Invitations and targeted questions, Option 1:

Emily chooses to focus on the visceral image/emotional handle of: "Something is biting me slowly inside." This strikes her as a very poignant and yet vague emotional handle.

EMILY: I know you are feeling numb just now and I'm wondering if we can go back to that sense of something biting you slowly from the inside. Where do you feel that? (to evoke bodily response) What is that biting sensation saying? (to evoke meaning making)

Specific evocative invitation to expand, Option 2:

EMILY: (Replaying the cue) You look at the overworked 12-year-old with that disease and the kind doctor saying, “This is from too much work, this is from too much stress. You are such a brave little girl to receive the injections!” When you remember that you don’t go numb. You weep. Can you see the 12-year-old, and can you see her there in pain and maybe looking in the doctor’s eyes, receiving praise for being so brave?

Specific evocative invitation to expand, Option 3:

EMILY: (Repeating first in proxy voice) “The doctor saw my pain, but my mother said nothing. No way to get her to back off.” It must be so much safer to go numb when thinking of mother, than to begin to feel anger and injustice; safer to go numb than to begin to connect that fire in your belly with a message to mother. She was so cruel to you as a child and to this day her criticisms and judgements and punishments continue. It is almost not safe to notice feeling anger at her for her many cruelties when her judgements are ever-present. Safer to go numb, yes? How is it to notice that this going numb is working to keep you safe? (This evocative response is combined with a validation, a conjecture, and a reframe.)

Putting it all together into a coherent whole (evoking and assembling):

EMILY: This startle reflex (mirrors Olivia’s jolt with hands up) is there on the edge all the time, triggered by many things – such as your mother’s comments, your own and your daughter’s chronic health problems, and the war and physical dangers you face. Your vigilance makes so much sense, given all the dangers in your life today. However, if I am hearing correctly – the deeper biting on the inside are the judgements, past and present from your mom, biting away with questions – “Is it me? Am I being punished? Do I not deserve better?” Am I understanding you?

Note: This coherent whole includes the triggers: mother’s comments, health problems, dangers of war; action tendency: startle reflex, being vigilant all the time; body: sensation of slowly biting on the inside; meanings: negative view of self – undeserving, being punished.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

After reading Emily’s responses, compare your responses with hers and see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your style of using evocative micro-skills to expand. Also, make a note of your evocative strengths. Your evocative micro-skills may be similar to Emily’s responses or very different – either is ok. The goal here is to identify a key element a client has shared that feels too general or vague and that would be helpful to elaborate, and to practice an EFT micro-skill to invite expansion. Insert your strengths and discoveries:

EFIT Evocative Workout: Evoking Specificity and Granularity with Beau

The next workout is directed more generally at evoking specificity and granularity, without all the elements of emotion. To fully understand a client and for a client to have increased coherence about their own experience, EFT therapists always want to elicit more specific, granular expressions. This is very useful in EFT Tango Move 1, while reflecting the present process. It is easy for an EFT therapist to presume understanding of what a client says, when frequently a more granular description of felt experience would add more coherence for a client, would be more empowering to them, and of course, would enhance understanding between client and therapist.

Context

Beau has been married to Jade for 20 years with a good life together. They pride themselves for how they have supported each other through various career changes and geographic relocations. Beau arrives in therapy, spinning and in desperation over a recent conversation with Jade where she told him that while on a trip to Australia with her girlfriends, she had a visit with her ex-partner, Johnny. The therapist suggested Beau and Jade come to therapy together.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to identify your inner attunement process and to create your own evocative response or question to invite elaboration on an element you feel needs more specificity.

BEAU: I know you asked me to invite Jade to come here with me, but I don't want to be near her. What on earth was she thinking? It is unbearable, really. I'm flabbergasted. She admitted to having continued to have romantic feelings for him until that visit. She insists it's over now and that their final visit has convinced her that it is me she wants to be with – but that is little consolation!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Identify something in the client's expression that you feel would be helpful to expand or make more specific or granular in the present moment. Something that is vague, obscure, general, abstract, impersonal, or past tense, for example. Note your internal resonance: _____

Your evocative response to invite more specificity, emotional depth, or granularity:

1. Reflect/repeat, the element you want to expand: _____
2. Evoke elaboration
 - i. Repeat the client's words, pausing to invite elaboration _____
 - ii. Specifically invite the client to say more about the key element you repeated: _____

After inserting your evocative response or question, read it out loud, to get the feel of how evocative it sounds. Does it invite the client to make their experience more granular, more alive?

Next, compare your responses with Emily’s below to see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your EFT *way of being*.

Emily’s Inner Process and Attunement

Emily is curious to evoke more about “unbearable” or “flabbergasted” or what Beau is referring to when he says, “What was she thinking?” More specifics on any of this will elicit some concrete words to his experience when he is feeling so overwhelmed and stunned.

Emily’s Evocative Responses to Invite Elaboration

1. Repetition: “*Unbearable!*” She pauses and waits for Beau to expand.
2. Specific invitations: Three options are given below.

EMILY: *Flabbergasted.* Can you tell me what flabbergasts you the most?

EMILY: Can you tell me the worst of all this for you?

EMILY: You wonder what she was thinking. Tell me more about what goes through your mind, as you wonder that.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

After reading Emily’s responses, compare your responses with hers and see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your style of using evocative micro-skills to expand. Also, make a note of your evocative strengths. Your evocative micro-skills may be similar to Emily’s responses or very different – either is ok. The goal here is to identify a key element a client has shared that feels too general or vague and that would be helpful to elaborate, and practice an EFT micro-skill to invite expansion. Insert your strengths and discoveries for integrating:

EFIT Evocative Workout: Evoking a Focus and Goals with Aleid, Beginning Therapy

To be warm, invitational, and focused, an EFT therapist seeks to elicit a client’s hope for therapy, as well as to extend an invitation to share what they want the therapist to know about them and to build a collaborative relationship that centers clients’ experience.

Aleid, enters your office in an agitated state, not having completed any intake information. You are unsure of the proper pronunciation of their name or of their preferred pronouns.

ALEID: (Barely seated – glances at the therapist.) I am so glad you could see me today. How do we begin?

Create an open invitation for the client to share what they want the therapist to know about them and to name their hopes and goals for therapy. To model safety and collaboration and a non-expert stance, try to create an evocative invitation without questions. If you prefer to ask a question – experiment with both questions and non-questions, and examine which approach is more evocative and collaborative.

Your evocative response to evoke the client's hopes for therapy: _____

After inserting your evocative response to elicit goals and hopes for therapy, above, compare it with Emily's response below. As always, this is not about being right or wrong. It is about practicing a very important EFT skill for finding focus and shaping goals.

Emily's Responses

Option 1

EMILY: I'd like to hear about your hopes for our work together or what prompted you to make this appointment today.

Option 2 If the above invitation feels too clinical or formal

EMILY: How about you begin with telling me something you would like me to know about you – about what makes you unique?

Can you identify anything about Emily's responses that you may want to integrate into your style? Make a note of what you have discovered or a strength you have to celebrate.

Validation

EFCT Validation Workout: Jordan and Olive, Validating to Contain Escalation

Jordan is a biracial cisgender male; his father is Black and mother is white and Olive is a white cisgender female. Jordan is an emergency service worker and Olive works in middle management in a large corporation. They are caught in an escalated pursue/withdraw cycle where, Olive will freeze Jordan out for days, while sending him very accusatory texts at the same time. One of her biggest triggers is seeing him on his phone and one of his biggest triggers is the "stings" of her accusations. This is the second marriage for each of them and they each have teenage sons who do not live with them. The trust is broken between them since Jordan admitted to Olive that he invited a female co-worker to his hotel room, while away on a conference trip. There was no sexual intimacy between them. Nevertheless, Jordan felt so guilty about it, that, rather than withdraw completely which is his tendency, he told Olive about it, hoping it would bring them closer together.

Client Expression

Read the clients' expressions below out loud as though you were them. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own validation.

In this workout, you have the opportunity to validate, first, Olive and then Jordan

JORDAN: She is important. Definitely! I have made so many changes to show her she is important. She just doesn't see it.

OLIVE: I do not feel like a priority. He hasn't made any changes. I hear his words, but I do not believe him. Let me tell you what Jordan did ... As I see it, he defines himself by his work. His work is more important than me. More important than being a husband. Maybe he has made some changes, but I still do not feel like a priority. Actions speak louder than words.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune to the most poignant dilemma, struggle, stuck place, or conflicting emotional experiences or perspectives. _____

2. Find words to name this conflict or struggle, linking/ juxtaposing the elements that are in conflict

Your Validation to Olive, without Invalidating Jordan

Form a validation by making the struggle explicit and by making "emotional sense" out of the struggle.

After writing out your validation for Olive, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune: Emily is attuned to the rigidity in Olive's perception that she is not a priority, as she also attunes to the pain of not feeling important. She attunes to Olive's perceptions and attachment meanings as her meanings and not facts about Jordan. She believes Jordan – that Olive is important and she respects that Olive does not trust she is important to him. She also attunes to the facial, bodily struggle Jordan is having as he listens to Olive talk disparagingly about him.
2. Emily finds these words to formulate the dilemma: Olive firmly believes and fears she is not a priority to Jordan. Jordan is at a loss to prove to Olive that she is important to him or to rebuild her trust.

Emily's Validation to Olive, while also holding Jordan's experience as valid:

EMILY: I hear you. You still don't trust that you are a priority to Jordan. You hear his words, you even notice some changes he has made, but nothing reaches that place inside of you that just does not trust you are a priority to him!

While Olive spoke, Jordan has been getting increasingly restless. His face twitches, and his foot trembles. He purses his lips and grimaces.

EMILY: (Looking at Jordan) Your leg is twitching and your face is grimacing. What's coming up as you are hearing Olive describe how she simply does not trust she is a priority to you?

JORDAN: (Pursing his lips, churning his face, pauses for 12 seconds, with his lips moving as though he is trying to find words) A feeling of desperation. Hopelessness. What more can I do?

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune to the most poignant dilemma, struggle, stuck place, or conflicting emotional experiences or perspectives. _____

2. Find words to name this conflict or struggle, linking/ juxtaposing the elements that are in conflict. _____

Your Validation to Jordan, without Invalidating Olive:

Form a validation by making the struggle explicit and by making "emotional sense" out of the struggle.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attunement: Emily is attuned to the visible struggle in Jordan's face and body, in his long pause, and in his words desperation and hopeless.
2. Emily finds these words to formulate the dilemma – the trust is broken between them and they both truly want it back but are helpless to get out of their pattern to rebuild it.

Emily's Validation to Jordan, while also holding Olive's experience as valid:

EMILY: Of course, it is very difficult to listen to Olive describe the way she sees things. And you are listening! This is a raw place as she continues to share that she simply does not trust you yet! You are sincerely wondering, "What more can I do to convince her?" You feel desperate to find a way through, yes? Desperate to find a way to restore the trust that, as of today, remains broken.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner processes and validation responses to Olive and to Jordan, with Emily's. Your responses may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming responses that

validate one partner without invalidating the other. After comparing your responses with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style of forming validations.

EFCT Validation Workout: Ray and Anjie, Validating Meanings Made in Their Repetitive Pattern

Context

Ray and Anjie's different needs for physical order readily trigger their negative cycle. Ray admits he has an obsessive need for perfection. He gets very anxious and demanding of Anjie when things are not in "perfect order." He wants things to be perfectly tidy and clean. He tells her how to take time to wipe the counter spotless, for example. The harder he pushes for visual perfection, the more she tries to please him and then gives up and withdraws, and the more he senses she doesn't understand him or need him and might be better off without him, the greater his demands for cleanliness and tidiness become, and the more she senses she is failing him.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own heightening response.

ANJIE: I understand his needs for perfection. I do. But I am not interested in perfect order and obsessive cleanliness. I want him to be happy with me (voice quivering, tears filling her eyes) but there is no room to hear from me; no room for my ideas; no room for me. First, his tone, then his look, and then eventually by the time his response comes out, it is so strong and so firm and so straightforward it is like, okay, let me just go in my room and cry it out.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Attune to the most poignant dilemma, struggle, stuck place, or conflicting emotional experiences or perspectives. _____

Find words to name this conflict or struggle, linking/ juxtaposing the elements that are in conflict

Your Validation

Form a validation by making the struggle explicit and understandable/making "emotional sense."

After inserting your validation, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attunement: What strikes Emily as the most poignant dilemma or stuck place is Anjie with tears and a quivering voice saying, "I want him to be happy with me, but there isn't room for me."
2. Emily identifies the conflicting elements to be:
Ray's action tendency – demands for perfection and order – is in conflict with Anjie's longing for him to be happy with her but having different ideas of décor and spontaneity, and her action tendency to timidly offer different ideas but retreat in the face of his demands.

Emily's Validation

Read it out loud to feel the full impact of how, specifically, the dilemma or conflict is legitimate or understandable.

EMILY: This is indeed a difficult difference between the two of you. You care about Ray and want him to be happy with you, yet you don't know how to be yourself with him without triggering him to push back against your ideas, so you eventually pull back and walk away in tears from the man whose acceptance and love you long for.

Optional, addition: Ray, you see her disappear from you and you take that to mean that she doesn't need you. You imagine, "She'd be better off without me." It makes sense that when you, Anjie, retreat because you just can't seem to meet Ray's standards for tidiness and cleanliness, that Ray takes that as you not wanting *him*. And it makes sense, Ray, that if you feel unhappy and anxious with Anjie's attempts, that she takes it to mean you are not happy with her.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming responses that validate one partner without invalidating the other. After comparing your responses with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style of forming validations.

EFIT Validation Workout: Validating Justin for His Pace and Courage during an Imaginal Encounter

Context

The therapist is shaping an encounter for Justin to speak to his imaginal father in an encounter. His father had been physically abusive to Justin for his entire life until he left home at 17.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were them. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own validation.

JUSTIN: I want to speak to him... I want to...But it just takes time.... (Long pause. Looks directly at the therapist.) He is old and sick now. I know he can't hurt me anymore. I feel the welts on my back ...burning...but to tell him how wrong he was to strike that twelve-year-old boy (pause). ...I want to tell him...I'm getting there. (Again looks at the therapist.)

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune to the most poignant dilemma, struggle, stuck place, or conflicting emotional experiences or perspectives. _____

2. Find words to name this conflict or struggle, linking/ juxtaposing the elements that are in conflict. _____

Your Validation

Form a validation by making the struggle explicit and making “emotional sense” out of the struggle.

After writing out your validation, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Emily attunes to the courage Justin is feeling in the midst of doing a task that feels almost too much for him, yet also attunes to the connection between them as Justin makes eye contact and then closes his eyes again.
2. Words for the dilemma: He wants to speak to an imaginal, abusive father yet he finds it very difficult – almost too difficult. It is clear, however that he wants to do this, as difficult as it is, and it seems he is drawing strength from the therapist's presence and from looking into the therapist's eyes.

Emily's Validation

Read it out loud to feel the full impact of how, specifically, the dilemma or conflict is legitimate or understandable.

EMILY: It's like you are saying, "I can do this. I want to do this. Give me time... it is so difficult and so important," yes? So we are taking as much time as you need, to gather your courage. This is so hard, and you are so courageous

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming validations. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

Heightening

EFCT Heightening Workout: Wayne and Jessica Treading Carefully to Avoid Hurt

Context

Jessica and Wayne are one of the main cases in *Stepping into Emotionally Focused Therapy*. Wayne, a Black man of Ethiopian heritage and Jessica, a biracial woman with lighter skin, have a withdraw/withdraw pattern, though Jessica is a soft pursuer who either protests in sharp tones when she feels offended by Wayne's response or she goes quiet and sometimes withdraws for days, and Wayne is left baffled by the unpredictability and troublesome dynamic he does not understand.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own heightening response.

WAYNE: (With a slight tone of caution, from a quivering voice, bafflement on his face.) I don't know how to talk to her, so she doesn't get hurt. I need to tread so carefully, or I'll get caught in the crossfire!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. What emotional handle, image, client words, or bodily response strikes you as capturing the most significant marker of emerging or newly distilled emotional experience to savor and heighten?

2. How do you resonate in your body? What is your felt sense of this emotional experience?

Your Heightening Response

Combine the words and your felt sense of attachment threat into a heightening response, using elements of RISSSSSC: Slowly and simply repeat the emotional handle to open into greater depths, adding *attachment frame* and specificity where possible. Match, and then heighten clients' emotional tone, varying vocal intonation. Maintain safety with prosody, melodic soothing simple, soft, slow, low tones.

After inserting your heightening response, read it out loud. The tone and pace of *how* a heightening response is said is very important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, slowly, simply and either softly or in a tone that matches the client's emotional tone that you are wanting to heighten. Experiment with repetition and proxy voice. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Emotional handle: The image of *tread carefully or get caught in the crossfire* strikes Emily as capturing Wayne's emerging emotional experience. His cautious voice, baffled face, together with this dangerous image of *getting hit in the crossfire*, against the backdrop of his cultural reality of being unsafe in the world as a black man – vulnerable to getting caught in someone's crossfire, totally unprovoked – strike Emily as a powerful message of how unsafe the couple's repetitive cycle is for them.
2. Emily's resonance: Emily senses her limitations to resonate with the dangers a black man faces in a white racist society, yet she feels in her gut and in her heart, some of the terror of being so concerned that if his wife gets hurt by something he says or does, he will be in danger – will feel defenseless – and will get hurt back by her backlash or her disappearance.

Emily's Heightening Response

Read Emily's heightening response out loud in a soft, slow manner, to feel its full impact.

EMILY: So, so risky – don't do anything that will hurt Jessica or you'll be in danger – you'll be at risk of getting hurt in the crossfire if your best efforts somehow hurt her. Your voice quivers as you say I just don't know how to talk...I must tread very carefully or I'll hurt her and then I'll be in danger! Living in danger – treading very carefully so your words don't hurt her in such a way that you get hurt back, yes?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily's. Your responses may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming heightening responses. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

EFIT Heightening Workout: Olivia, Celebrating a New Position

Context

Olivia lives nearby to her 60-year-old mother, who was unsafe, neglectful, and abusive to Olivia while she was growing up. Now with a family of her own and some significant health issues, Olivia relies on her mother on a regular basis to drive the children to their after-school activities. Frequently, almost daily, her mother criticizes and demeans her, which she tolerates without protest. Olivia has been working in therapy to clarify her own longings and emotions and is beginning to speak up for herself to colleagues, to her friends, and to her partner, however, she has not yet spoken up to her mother.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own heightening response.

OLIVIA: I did something very meaningful today. I spoke with my mother and expressed anger. I think it wasn't easy for her but meaningful for me. I was very clear that I cannot tolerate her ongoing criticism of me, almost every day. I was shaking in my body and my voice. I have no idea how she will be going forward, but I feel so much better!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. What emotional handle, image, client words, or bodily response strikes you as capturing the most significant marker of emerging or newly distilled emotional experience that you want to savor and heighten? _____
2. How do you resonate in your body? What is your felt sense of this emotional experience? _____

Your Heightening Response

Combine the words and your felt sense of attachment threat into a heightening response, using elements of RISSSSC. Slowly and simply repeat the emotional handle to open into greater depths, adding an *attachment frame* and specificity where possible. Repeat a salient image that captures any newly emerging element of emotion. Match, and then heighten clients' emotional tone, varying vocal intonation. This is likely to evoke a slightly deeper level of experiencing in the client. Maintain safety with prosody, melodic soothing simple, soft, slow, and low tones.

After inserting your heightening response, read it out loud. The tone and pace of *how* a heightening response is said is very important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, slowly, simply, and either softly, or in a tone that matches the client’s emotional tone that you are wanting to heighten. After this, compare your response with Emily’s suggestion below.

Emily’s Inner Process and Attunement

1. Salient emotional handle: Emily is struck most with the confidence is her voice as Olivia says, “It was meaningful for me to express my anger. I was clear, shaking in voice and body, but clear.”
2. Resonance: Emily feels her heart jump with joy. What a huge risk her client has taken. Physically she needs her mother’s help with the family and her mother could retaliate. She is struck with the courage Olivia took as her body and voice were shaking. And yet she was clear at the time, and remains clear, that this was very meaningful despite how her mother will respond. This confidence is an emerging shift in the sense of self.

Emily’s Heightening Response

Read it out loud in a soft, slow manner, to feel its full impact:

EMILY: What a huge step you took! Shaking in your body and in your voice and yet feeling clear that this is exactly what I needed to do! (proxy voice for added heightening.) What a lot of courage and clarity it took for you to speak so directly to you mother. Expressing your anger and knowing this was meaningful for you, despite however she will be towards you going forward!

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily’s. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming heightening responses. After comparing your response with Emily’s, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

Therapist Transparency

EFCT Therapist Transparency Workout: Transparency about the Therapy Process with Elliott and Emma

Context

Elliott and Emma have stabilized their repetitive pursue–withdraw pattern, and they are strengthening their relationship. The trust between them was badly ruptured when Emma discovered some condoms in Elliott’s’ briefcase, and slowly after numerous disclosures from

Elliott over several months, learned that he had been having an ongoing affair with a colleague on his frequent business trips. Elliott is eager to repair their broken trust and he has engaged significantly in the relationship. He has disclosed openly about his own struggles and is showing up consistently in the relationship. The therapist is confident that Elliott is in a position where he could listen to the depth of Emma's broken heart without withdrawing or becoming defensive.

Nonetheless, the couple has not yet had a *healing injuries conversation* to repair their broken trust and rebuild the attachment bond. Emma remains very reluctant to discuss the events of broken trust, preferring not to "rock the boat" and to enjoy the connection they have re-established. She "puts on a brave face," she says, fearing her tears and any signs of her sense of brokenness are likely to trigger Elliot and make him back away again. The client's expression below comes after the therapist invites Emma to share with Elliott how hard she works to keep up her brave face and not show how broken she feels inside.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud. Given the context described above, follow the prompts to identify your inner process and attunement and to form an expression of therapist transparency (self-disclosure) that you feel could help to create safety in the therapeutic alliance and be of value to the clients.

EMMA: (Startling slightly, with wide eyes, and a muted chuckle.) You just want to make me cry the whole time!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune: Identify what strikes you about the therapeutic alliance, the need for safety, and how your transparency could be of value. _____
2. Check your own bodily-felt sense as you anticipate sharing. (This is like anticipating an encounter where you are the discloser, so there is an element of risk.) Breathe and be mindful of your own level of arousal and presence. (Similar to Move 3) _____

Your Therapist Transparency

1. **Disclose** to the client: Begin with reflecting on the significant part of the client's message and describe how your disclosure is directly related to them or the relationship between you. (Similar to Move 3) _____

2. **Check for the impact** on them. (Similar to Move 4) _____

After inserting your responses, compare with Emily's below. Take note of similarities and differences, identifying your strengths and anything you might want to consider integrating into your EFT style of using therapist transparency.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune: Emily feels quite certain about the alliance with both partners. With Emma's little chuckle as she said, "You just want to make me cry" she nearly missed the opportunity to strengthen the task alliance as well as consolidate the growing stabilization in the couple, but then realized if she used a little transparency she could do both.
2. Body: As Emily anticipates sharing, she feels a twinge of flutter in her heart, but mostly feels excited to move close and describe to Emma, that they are stepping into a process much richer than tears.

Emily's Transparency

EMILY: Let me tell you: I am not just wanting to make you cry the whole time. I am sensing that you and Emmett are solid and safe enough to have this conversation. I know it feels very risky to let down your brave face and tell Emmett how deeply broken your heart feels over the betrayals of his turning to this other woman over and over again, but I do feel that you have the safety between you. That is why I am inviting you to let him see just some of your pain.

Checking for the impact on Emma of her disclosure, Emily adds: How does that sound to you?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and transparency with Emily's. Your responses may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement, to reflect on what you have to disclose to the client about yourself or about your activity in the therapy process that could move their therapy forward, and to then form a genuine self-disclosure or expression of therapist transparency.

After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

EFIT Therapist Transparency Workout: Checking Accuracy of a Conjecture with Sam

Context

Sam is exploring the impact of his strategy of minimizing and trying to suppress the hatred and anger he feels regarding an anti-semitic attack he survived, ten years earlier. It happened on one of the rare occasions he was wearing a yarmulka. Sam is not an observant Jew but this happened to be on the walk home from his father's funeral, where he had respectfully worn the traditional head covering. His right arm sustained some permanent damage in the attack, but he bravely moved on, minimizing, comparing with others' pain, saying, "My situation is not as bad as what others have suffered." He acknowledges he has tried to rationalize his trauma and sentimentalize it through various artistic endeavors. At all times he has remained true to his commitment not to become angry or to seek retribution. After tracking his de-activating pattern, to regulate his core

anger, he owns, “What is even scarier than feeling the anger and hatred, is staying away from the anger.” He identifies his experience of anger in his tensing jaw and a tightness in his chest and stomach.

It has become safe for him to own the anger and the huge cost he has paid for ignoring it. While exploring the anger, located as a cube of hatred in his chest, the therapist invites Sam to speak from the anger; to voice the anger.

Read the client and therapist dialogue below out loud. Given the context described above, follow the prompts to identify your inner process and attunement and to form an expression of therapist transparency (self-disclosure) that you feel could be of value to the client.

SAM: (Speaking from the anger which he says feels like a scream) Take me back! Take me back to another place before the attack, when I didn’t have to handle this. (His voice is changing in tone, sounding almost like a plea, and slowing in pace.) When I didn’t have to try to come to terms with such a very bad thing. Losing use of my arm...losing my sense of safety...When I didn’t have these things on my mind, you know. (Face is softening, and tense jaw shifts into a very sad-looking face.)

THERAPIST: So, this cry that started out with anger, “Take me back!” almost sounds like it is becoming a sad cry? (After sharing this sense that the emotional tone is changing, the therapist suddenly wonders if this conjecture of sadness overtaking the anger may have been inaccurate or minimizing Sam’s experience.)

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune: If you have this concern that conjecturing sadness when anger was the core emotion you had been exploring, how could your transparency be of value to keep a strong alliance and keep the client engaged in his emotional exploration process? _____
2. Check your own bodily-felt sense as you anticipate sharing. (This is like anticipating an encounter where you are the discloser, so there is an element of risk.) Breathe and be mindful of your own level of arousal and your presence. (Similar to Move 3) _____

Your Therapist Transparency

1. **Disclose** to the client: Begin with reflecting on the significant part of the client’s message and describe how your disclosure is directly related to them or the relationship between you. (Similar to Move 3) _____
2. **Check for the impact** on them. (Similar to Move 4) _____

After inserting your responses, compare with Emily’s below. Take note of similarities and differences, identifying your strengths and anything you might want to consider integrating into your EFT style of using therapist transparency.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attune: Emily is struck by the intensity of Sam's action tendency to scream, in contrast with the near pleading tone as he says, "Take me back to another place." His facial expression and his story suddenly seem to convey grief for all he lost in the trauma, however, she is concerned that a conjecture at sadness may be a distraction or imply he shouldn't feel anger.
2. Checking her bodily-felt sense, Emily notices her body feels shaky and she feels a need to be transparent about where this sudden shift came from, since they had been working together quite a while to honor and trust his expressions of anger for this attack he survived. She was following his vocal and bodily signals of emotion but didn't want to minimize his anger and thereby reinforce his old survival strategy of deactivating and suppressing anger.

Emily's Transparency

EMILY: When you say, "Take me back – take me back to a time before," I suddenly feel the sadness of the losses you endured in this attack. Perhaps I'm off-base here? Perhaps that is more my sadness for you, than your sadness? (To check with Sam, how her transparency about her conjecture landed with him, she adds): How is it for you that I am struck with sadness over your losses, more than your anger in this moment?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily's. Your responses may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement, to reflect on how what you have to disclose to the client about yourself will move their therapy forward, and to then form a genuine self-disclosure or expression of therapist transparency.

After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

Empathic Conjectures

EFCT Empathic Conjecture Workout: Kat and Sal, A Withdrawer's Fear on the Leading Edge

Context

Kat is more of a withdrawer in the relationship. Sal pursues for contact comfort and response from Kat. His best attempts to get responses from her when he is feeling stressed and his unclear calls for help when he is overwhelmed, are usually responded to with silence and withdrawal from Kat. He becomes increasingly frustrated at her for disappearing.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic conjecture.

KAT: It's one of those looks that really throw me... When he walks into the room, his eyes get wider – his eyebrow raises – like a blast of silent criticism, like a brow-beating. He insists it's not about me. (Laughs.) But I see one of those looks and I'm gone – out of the way – It's like he *brow beats* me right out of the room!

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify explicit and implicit signals that hint at the emotional experience of threat, security, and longings, on the leading edge:
 - a. Verbal: _____
 - b. Non-verbal: _____
2. Relevant context (what you know about this client's position and pattern and greater socio-cultural context): _____

3. Find words to capture your inference of the leading-edge emotion: _____
_____ Resonate with your felt sense of this inference. What do you feel? _____

Your Empathic Conjecture

1. With a tentative tone, link some explicit expression from the client to a thin slice of experience you hear implied. Experiment with proxy voice. _____

2. Invite the client to confirm or disconfirm. _____

After inserting your empathic conjecture read it out loud. Your tone and pace are important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, with tentativeness and an invitation to the client to confirm or disconfirm the fit with their experience. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Emily detects the following signals that hint at emotional experience on the leading edge:
The forceful blast that Kat feels when she sees a look on Sal's face and his raised eyebrow.
Kat's laughter as she says that Sal insists he is not upset with *her*.
The tension in Kat's voice as she says she simply cannot believe that it is not her, that Sal is upset with – that his facial cues feel so much more powerful than his words.
2. Relevant information about larger context and position and pattern: Emily recalls that Sal tries to get responses from Kat. He doesn't always send clear messages, rather he gets critical at times and increasingly frustrated at her for disappearing. Kat has a rapid "go silent and disappear reaction" to his facial expressions.

3. **Emily finds these words to capture the leading-edge emotion:** Emily senses Kat must be afraid of Sal's rejection; afraid she is bad/wrong in his eyes; perhaps even afraid that he's about to give up on her.

Emily resonates with a felt sense of being blasted away as unwanted.

Emily's Empathic Conjecture

Read Emily's empathic conjecture below out loud to feel the impact.

EMILY: I might be wrong here, but it sounds like you're saying, "I can't trust his words that he is not accusing me." Sounds like (continuing in proxy voice) that look on his face blasts me back – filling me with fear of his rejection, almost like, I'm accused – it's me – I'm to blame and I'll never be enough for him... simply cannot trust it's really me he wants. Am I getting how this is for you, Kat? Frightening that he is getting fed up with you? Am I getting it, Kat?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic conjecture with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming empathic conjectures with tentativeness, while being open to being corrected if your words do not fit in the moment for the client. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

EFCT Empathic Conjecture Workout: Jordan and Olive, Looking for an Opening in the Briar Patch

Context

Jordan and Andrea, from an earlier validation workout, are highly escalated, since Jordan confessed to having invited a colleague to his hotel room, several years earlier. This event broke the trust between them and the pattern between them continues to confirm Olive's fear that she is no longer a priority to Jordan. Olive pursues Jordan with anger and meanness and Jordan shuts down. Silent treatment for days is punctuated with hostile texting back and forth.

Read the clients' expressions below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic conjecture to Jordan.

OLIVE: I know I get loud and hurtful. I just wish he'd step up and move in and comfort me. I'm so hurt, and he just keeps avoiding. All I want is for us to be close. Problem is, he keeps avoiding closeness! (Her tone is sharp.)

JORDAN: I hear her words. I hear that she wants comfort (Pause) but I don't know how. (Face moving, biting his cheeks, pursing his lips, wrinkling his forehead, foot twitching.)

There is *no opening in the briar patch*, so I – (pauses and interlocks his arms to demonstrate) – close up. It's easier.

Respond to Jordan with an empathic conjecture about his emotional experience on the leading edge.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify explicit and implicit signals that hint at the emotional experience of threat, security, and longings, on the leading edge:
 - a. Verbal: _____
 - b. Non-verbal: _____
2. Relevant context (what you know about this client's position and pattern and greater socio-cultural context): _____
3. Find words to capture your inference of the leading-edge emotion: _____
 _____ Resonate with your felt sense of
 this inference. What do you feel? _____

Your Empathic Conjecture

1. With a tentative tone, link some explicit expression from the client to a thin slice of experience you hear implied. Experiment with proxy voice. _____

2. Invite the client to confirm or disconfirm. _____

After inserting your empathic conjecture read it out loud. Your tone and pace are important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, with tentativeness and an invitation to the client to confirm or disconfirm the fit with their experience. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Explicit and implicit messages that hint at emotional experience on the leading edge: Emily identifies
 - a. Verbal: Olive admits she gets loud and mean when she wants Jordan to be close and comforting; Jordan hears her words but can find no way to move close.
 - b. Non-verbal: Olive's sharp tone sounds threatening. Jordan's face and foot are moving rapidly, signaling a lot of emotion taking place. *No opening in the briar patch* implies Jordan is considering a dangerous task.
2. Relevant context: There is an event (Jordan admitting to inviting a woman to his hotel room) that broke the trust between them. Their escalating cycle has Olive in perpetual fear that Jordan is no longer wanting to be close to her.

3. Inference: Emily infers Jordan wants to move close to Olive but is deterred by a sense of emotional threat.
4. Emily resonates with a felt sense of how much Jordan wants to move close to Olive but that it feels dangerous – like walking through a briar patch.

Emily's Empathic Conjecture

Read Emily's empathic conjecture below out loud to feel the impact.

With a tentative tone, Emily links Jordan's explicit expression (no opening in the briar patch) to his longing to comfort Olive.

EMILY: It is easier to close up and not try to get through the briar patch when her words sound prickly, even as she says, "I want your comfort." Yet it sounds like you do hear her. You look for an opening. "Can I move close?" and when you can find no opening in the briar patch, when it looks too dangerous, you close up and walk away. Is that it? She never gets to discover that you do hear her and do look for a way to move close, am I getting it?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic conjecture with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming empathic conjectures with tentativeness, while being open to being corrected if your words do not fit in the moment for the client. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

EFIT Empathic Conjecture: When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Fritz

Context

This workout continues with Fritz, who is introduced in the *Workouts for Stepping into Emotionally Focused Therapy* in heightening and earlier empathic conjecture workouts. While deliberately looking at the traumatic scene of his decades-old attack, he struggles to feel he has a right to process his trauma when people are suffering the world over! He copes by trying to rationalize how this happened and is determined not to allow the trauma to make him a vengeful person. He is beginning to explore the impact of this unprocessed trauma.

Client Expression

Together Fritz and the therapist approach this scene and look at him on the ground. Fritz has previously had many flashbacks of the trauma.

FRITZ: (In a firm, assertive voice.) This is the first time I have intentionally looked at myself there on the ground, beaten and bloody...the gangsters are kicking me. (Tears flowing down his cheeks; repeatedly opening his eyes to look at Emily.)

This workout presents an empathic conjecture from Emily, to Fritz, before you get a workout.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement as She Shapes an Encounter

1. Signals that hint at emotional experience on the leading edge: Emily identifies:
 - a. Verbal: looking at his body on the ground, beaten and bloodied, gangsters kicking him.
 - b. Non-verbal: tears running down his face, opening his eyes to gaze at the therapist every few seconds, implies to Emily that her presence is helping him to feel safe to look at this scene in his imagination.
2. Relevant context: This is the first time Fritz has entered this scene deliberately. It is unlike the flashbacks that he has from time to time. He is entering the scene and is clearly not alone because the therapist is with him, and he makes eye contact every few seconds as though to check for safety.
3. Leading-edge emotion: Emily senses softness and tenderness in Fritz's face and in his tears; her heart feels heavy as she sees his tears and as she also imagines this traumatic attack happening to this lovely, kind man. To capture this sense of softness and tenderness as she resonates with heaviness and compassion for this helpless man under attack, she chooses the word "pity."

Emily's Empathic Conjecture

Looking at yourself there on the ground – your beaten body there alone – can you almost feel some pity for him?

Client Expression

Read the dialogue between Fritz and Emily below out loud as though you were them. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic conjecture.

- FRITZ:* This is the first time I have seen myself in that scene, but I definitely do not want to feel pity for myself!
- THERAPIST* (Mistakenly presuming an implication of resisting to feel tenderness for his beaten self, conjectures): So as you see yourself on the ground and you are saying, "I am afraid to feel pity for you. I care, but I am afraid to feel pity for you?" (Therapist is unaware of the negative, cultural nuance the word "pity" has for Fritz.)
- FRITZ:* No, no, not that – more that, "You don't deserve someone to feel pity for you, because you didn't deserve that attack, do you know what I mean?"

Imagine you are Emily and you have just been corrected on a conjecture. The use of the word "pity" was a misstep. Consider how you could reflect on the new understanding and then attempt at a more accurate conjecture that may better match Fritz's experience.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify explicit and implicit signals that hint at the emotional experience of threat, security, and longings, on the leading edge:
 - a. Verbal: _____
 - b. Non-verbal: _____

2. Relevant context (what you know about this client's position and pattern and greater socio-cultural context): _____
3. Find words to capture your inference of the leading-edge emotion: _____
_____ Resonate with your felt sense of
this inference. What do you feel? _____

Your empathic conjecture of a message to send to his beaten body on the ground

1. Reflect on what Fritz has said to correct Emily and link that to a thin slice of experience you hear implied. Experiment with proxy voice. _____

2. Invite the client to confirm or disconfirm. _____

After inserting your empathic conjecture read it out loud. Your tone and pace are important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, with tentativeness, and offering an invitation to the client to confirm or disconfirm the fit with their experience. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Signals that hint at emotional experience on the leading edge: Emily identifies:
 - a. Verbal: He does not feel pity or want to feel pity toward himself on the ground. That would imply to him that he deserved this attack. *Pity* is a distasteful word for him!
 - b. Non-verbal: Fritz's strong voice and assertive response toward the therapist's misstep in the use of the word "pity" seems to empower him to state very clearly, that he did not deserve this attack!
2. Relevant context: This is the first time Fritz has entered this scene deliberately and his courage and core anger seem to be growing, as he corrects Emily.
3. Emily chooses these words to capture her inference of the leading-edge emotion: very adamant that he did not deserve this attack; perhaps beginning to feel ok about being assertively angry.

Emily's Empathic Conjecture (First she reflects what he has said. And then offers an empathic conjecture.)

EMILY: Looking at yourself there on the ground – your beaten body there, alone. What you just told me is, "I did not deserve this!" You don't deserve this at all! This attack is totally unjust and not your fault at all! Your voice and your words sound like you are beginning to feel safe to feel some anger at your attackers, am I right?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic conjecture with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming empathic conjectures with tentativeness, while

being open to being corrected if your words do not fit in the moment for the client. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

You may also make a note about what you are discovering about being corrected when an empathic conjecture does not fit for the client.

EFIT Empathic Conjecture: When a Conjecture Does Not Fit for Joy

Context

Joy, introduced in several workouts in *Workouts for Stepping into Emotionally Focused Therapy*, is a young professional, thriving in her career and sending financial support to her parents and adult sister, and her nephew, who are all strained financially. She places a high priority on practicing her Christian faith and the African American values of her father's family, all of which point toward serving and sacrificing for others. At the same time, she is feeling close to burnout and beginning to complain that her father doesn't carry his weight. She is saddened that all the money she had been saving for a vacation trip disappeared to help her family.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were the client. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement and to create your own empathic conjecture.

JOY: Sometimes you, you feel like you want to cry it out, and then there's those times where it's like I want to cry it out but the tears just won't come because it's just so exhausting to deal with (big sigh!). There is no end to their needs (exasperation in her voice) and I see my dreams of a trip for my vacation are rapidly disappearing.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

1. Identify explicit and implicit signals that hint at the emotional experience of threat, security, and longings, on the leading edge:
 - a. Verbal: _____
 - b. Non-verbal: _____
2. Relevant context (what you know about this client's position and pattern and greater socio-cultural context): _____
3. Find words to capture your inference of the leading-edge emotion: _____
 _____ Resonate with your felt sense of this inference. What do you feel? _____

Your Empathic Conjecture

1. With a tentative tone, link some explicit expression from the client to a thin slice of experience you hear implied. Experiment with proxy voice. _____
2. Invite the client to confirm or disconfirm. _____

After inserting your empathic conjecture read it out loud. Your tone and pace are important. Hear your own voice saying the words out loud, with tentativeness, and offering an invitation to the client to confirm or disconfirm the fit with their experience. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

Emily has heard how unfair it all seems that Joy gives and given to others and yet is exhausted and feels she needs to give even more despite her exhaustion.

1. Signals that hint at emotional experience on the leading edge: Emily identifies:
 - a. Verbal: want to cry it out! just so exhausting to deal with! no end to their needs; my dreams are disappearing.
 - b. Non-verbal: deep sighs and raised voice as she says, "There is no end to their needs!" imply frustration or anger to Emily.
2. Relevant context: Emily recognizes that Joy's African American and Christian values of giving to others are very important to her and she also hears her exhaustion and exasperation.
3. Leading-edge emotion: Emily chooses these words to capture her inference of the leading-edge emotion: anger at feeling she must sacrifice more and more even as she is wearing out.

Emily senses a tension in her own stomach as she attunes to the exhaustion and frustration in Joy's story. She also feels a kind of loneliness gnawing away in her chest as she sees how valiantly Joy is giving of herself to others and seems not to get much support back.

Emily's Empathic Conjecture and Joy's Response

With a tentative tone, Emily links Joy's explicit expressions of exhaustion and others' endless needs to a thin slice of emotions of frustration and anger that she hears implied.

- EMILY:* And, and those tears of just wanting to cry it out, they must also be angry tears in a way? Am I getting it? Giving and giving to others and nothing left for you? (Immediately after using the word "anger" Emily senses this may be a culturally offensive word to have used, given the negative stereotype of the "angry black woman." Thus, she quickly shifts back to the client's word, *exhaustion*.) Or, perhaps not angry tears, but very exhausted ones?
- JOY:* (Indicating this conjecture did not match her present-moment experience.) Um, more frustration. I don't think I'm necessarily angry, but very frustrated and, I think, heartbroken. Feeling like I have to take care of so many people, and then you know, when I need somebody to step in and help me, there's no one there, even if it's the same people that I've been helping for quite some time, so I think it's more heartbreak than anger for me.

In spite of Emily having missed the mark with her empathic conjecture, and because of her tentativeness and inviting Joy to confirm if her conjecture was an accurate understanding of the client's experience, Joy continues to move forward with her exploration, toward deeper emotional experiencing and clarity. She chose *frustration* as a more acceptable replacement for Emily's conjecture of *anger*, and then deepened into more core emotion of *heartbreak*.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and empathic conjecture with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with forming empathic conjectures with tentativeness, while being open to being corrected if your words do not fit in the moment for the client. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

As in the previous workout, you may also make a note about what you are discovering about how you like to respond when an empathic conjecture does not fit for the client.

Reframing

EFCT Reframing Workout: Dick and Jane, Caught in a Pattern of Broken Trust

Dick and Jane are starting to stabilize their pursue/withdraw pattern of Dick minimizing his emotions in the relationship, emotionally turning away from Jane, and in the past turning to random women online and to internet gambling for comfort and Jane getting frustrated and demanding more emotional presence from Dick. As they are stabilizing, Jane continues to complain and express, in frustrated tones, that she wants Dick to show up more. She says she knows he isn't gambling anymore or contacting other women but that when he shares so little about his workdays, she still gets scared and frustrated. She says it feels like he walks on eggshells around her and she almost feels like she can't find him behind his guardedness.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were Dick. Then follow the prompts to identify your inner attunement process and to formulate a depathologizing, attachment reframe.

DICK: I do walk on eggshells. I do hold back. I just don't want to burden her with the stresses of my day, and I don't know how to say things so she won't get upset or worried. Besides, sharing my petty stresses seems so wrong when I already carry the burden of how much I hurt her in the past.

Your Inner Process and Attunement as You Form a Reframe

1. Identify what needs a reframe. Where could an attachment reframe foster hope or inject new possibilities into an experience of helplessness or negativity? Is it an action tendency or a view of self or other that needs a reframe? _____

2. Tune into the attachment threat or attachment longing for each partner in this moment of reactivity. Identify the threat or longing. _____

3. Find simple words for the hidden attachment story or an attachment reframe of each one's action tendency that becomes the danger cue for the other.

Dick's action tendency: _____ Reframe: _____

Jane's action tendency: _____ Reframe: _____

Formulate your reframe: to highlight the hidden attachment messages of mattering to one another that are buried in the distressed interactions and bring the hopefulness of the attachment story into the light. _____

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement as She Forms a Reframe

1. What needs to be reframed? Emily identifies that an attachment reframe of Dick's caution and guardedness could inject new possibilities into the relationship dynamic. Also, she wants to reframe Dick's view of self as the one who hurt Jane so badly that he has no right to share his struggles with her.
2. Tuning into attachment threats or longings. Emily senses that Dick fears never feeling safe or deserving to have a voice with Jane and have her interested in his struggles. She senses that Jane fears living alone in this relationship, unsure if Dick will ever fully show up. Emily identifies that Dick's being so careful, what they both call "walking on eggshells," signals an attachment threat to Jane, who takes it to mean he is holding back from her and she cannot find him. She also identifies that Jane's pleas for Dick to share more trigger more caution in Dick who is already concerned about getting it right for Jane.
3. Simple words for an attachment reframe. Emily identifies these simple words for the hidden attachment story under the actions that signal danger for the other:
Dick's action tendency: He gets silent and withholds; Reframe: The intention is to be careful not to hurt Jane more; being cautious to get it right with her;
Jane's action tendency: She complains Dick doesn't talk about himself enough; Reframe: to encourage Dick to share more with her.

Emily's Reframe

EMILY: I hear you both working so hard to do whatever you can to repair your relationship and rebuild the broken trust. Dick, I hear you are walking on eggshells, holding back; You truly want so much to get it right with Jane now after all the hurt you have caused her by turning away from her to other women and gambling. Wanting her to feel safe and not hurt more, you remain quiet and cautious. And, of course, this is frustrating for you, Jane, because his quiet caution feels to you like distancing and hiding. You are fighting so hard to repair the relationship by encouraging Dick to feel safe to share more of himself. (Pauses) Am I hearing you correctly? You have two very different ways of trying to protect the relationship to make it safe for each other, yes?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

After reading Emily's responses, compare your responses with hers and see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your style of creating reframing responses. Also make a note of your strengths at reframing. Your reframe may be similar to Emily's responses or very different. Either is ok. The goal here is to shine the attachment light on the darkness and hopelessness to create an experience of hope and agency.

EFIT Reframing Workout: Alexandria, Reframing Grief and Anger

Context

Alexandria says her weeping is for decades of pain. She tried repeatedly to rekindle her high school friendships and was met with betrayal after betrayal, yet she did not give up trying. She is discovering underneath all the anguish she has been carrying for years that she is angry too, discovering she has hidden her own feelings and excused her friends for all the hurtful things they have done, always responding with a smile and understanding words. Now she describes a fire in her belly that says, "Wait a minute. This isn't right!" Alexandria is stabilized enough now to listen to the pain in her stomach that she has been suppressing for years. The pain says, "This is not fair! I have been suppressing my pain for years, and now I want to listen to it!"

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were Alexandria. Then follow the prompts to identify your inner attunement process and to formulate a depathologizing, attachment reframe.

ALEXANDRIA: (Weeping almost uncontrollably.) I see now, finally, that they will never be my good, safe group of friends ever again. Just breaks my heart. We were this safe little group of four since high school. We could share anything and everything. After all my attempts (voice trails off). Over and over I hid my hurt and said, "I understand" – even though I didn't understand. And I offered to help them and I got used, trampled, excluded. But I cared for them until they discarded me again. I was never fully accepted by them! I see it will never change. (More sobs.) It

breaks my heart to see how much they have changed. I deeply miss what we used to have!! I've lost my safe little nest! Feels like my tears will never stop!

Your Inner Process and Attunement as You Form a Reframe

1. Identify an attachment reframe that could foster growth or encouragement into this experience of helplessness or questioning. Do you focus on an action tendency or a view of self or other?

2. Tune into the contextual or attachment threat or attachment longing in the moment. Name the threat or longing: _____

3. Find simple words for an attachment reframe of her action tendency or her internal working models (IWM).

Your Reframe

After inserting your reframe, compare your responses with Emily's below. Your inner process and attunement and reframe may be similar to Emily's responses below or they may be very different – either is ok. The goal here is to practice attuning to see where an attachment reframe could shift a client's experience from helplessness and hopelessness to an emotionally alive experience of hope, agency, positivity, and new possibilities.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement as She Forms an Attachment Reframe

1. What needs to be reframed? Emily identifies that an attachment reframe of Alexandria's tears could open new possibilities and foster a positive view of self. Her tears could be reframed as her clarity and her capacity to listen to the fire in her belly that says, "They are no longer safe friends!"
2. Tuning into the attachment threats and longings: Emily attunes to how tears can be overwhelming if they are not clearly assembled, however, the meaning of Alexandria's tears seems to be that she is recognizing that the friendships have changed and cannot be revived. Emily senses as she attunes to Alexandria's tears that they are a clear validation of her loss and a new capacity to trust her emotional experience. The tears of grief are moving her toward new action tendencies and a positive view of self and the capacity to distinguish safe, reliable others from those who are unsafe and hurtful. The tears and the fire in her belly are telling her that these friendships are not good for her anymore. Emily attunes to Alexandria's longing for relief from pain; longing for comfort, longing for restored friendships that are dependable, loyal, and open.
3. Simple words for an attachment reframe. Emily identifies that Alexandria's tears and fire in her belly are a sign of her loss and readiness to say goodbye to a group of friends who have become

unreliable and unsafe. Her view of self is becoming stronger and more confident and her view of other is becoming clearer to see these friendships are no longer safe.

Emily reframes to highlight the new possibilities (new action tendencies and new views of self and other) in Alexandria's tears. Read it aloud to feel the full impact of Emily's attachment reframe.

EMILY: When you notice that all your best attempts to repair, dismissing your own pain at their hurtful actions, your many unsuccessful attempts to pull your friends back into the safe nest you used to share, you see this is not fair for you. You are listening to the fire in your belly that says, "This is not fair to me!" It is becoming safe to listen to the anger in your stomach that says it is not fair. Your deep sobs are your recognizing these friendships are over, yes? (Pausing for client to respond.) As much as you'd hope to bring this safe-haven, secure-base friendship-nest back to life, your aching stomach is saying, "Too much hurt. Too unfair. Time to notice this trusting bond has ended." Your deep sobs are saying, "I am already grieving this enormous loss; I am listening to the fiery message in my aching stomach, that says, 'Enough! You can be liberated from this prison where you sacrifice yourself for untrustworthy others!'" Am I understanding?

Your Strengths and Discoveries

After reading Emily's responses, compare your responses with hers and see if you discover anything you may want to integrate into your style of creating reframing responses. Also, make a note of your strengths at reframing. Your reframing may be similar to Emily's or very different – either is ok. The goal here is to shine the attachment light on the darkness and hopelessness to create an experience of hope and agency.

Catching Bullets

EFCT Catching Bullet Workout: Jamal and Abbie, During a Vulnerable Disclosure

Context

Jamal, a more withdrawn partner is trying very hard to please his partner, Abbie. He lives with residual guilt for the time she was in deep depression, worrying that his behavior at that time may have been what triggered her depression. He is very frightened she could slip into a depression again and feels helpless to know how to respond if she does.

Client Expression

Read the clients' expressions below aloud as though you were them. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement to formulate a bullet-catching response.

JAMAL: I remember seeing her crying and not wanting to get out of bed. I mean, it was such a bad time in our life. And, and I guess I feel like I turned my back on her and I

will never do that again. I'm still frightened of slipping back there, so I'm working extra hard to protect her, but it's still in the back of my mind what if I let her down? I don't ever want her to have to go through that in life again without me beside her. I don't.

ABBIE: (Fidgeting and looking uncomfortable; speaking in a harsh voice) I know! I know! But I'm not like that anymore! Just stop being afraid and stop holding back so much! You don't need to do that anymore!

Follow the prompts to attune to the threat each one is experiencing as the aggressive comment is made and then formulate a bullet-catching intervention.

Your Inner Process and Attunement for the Catching Bullets

1. Attune to the attachment threats occurring before you and resonate with the felt sense of the one sending a hurtful message and the one receiving the hurtful message. _____
2. Immediately act to interrupt the escalation and catch the aggression. Notice your own emotional balance and take a deep breath after interrupting, if not before. _____

Your Catching the Bullet Micro-Skill

1. Interrupt escalation: _____
2. Reflect present process without judgment: _____
3. Reframe the reactivity by conjecturing at confusion, attachment threat, disorientation, or disbelief: _____
4. If possible/appropriate: validate the positive attachment intention. _____
5. Check with client that the conjecture is accurate. _____
6. Refocus conversation. _____

After inserting your responses, read your bullet-catching responses aloud and compare with Emily's below. They do not need to be the same as hers. They are likely to be different and that is ok.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

1. Attachment threats: Emily attunes to the threatening moment for Abbie to hear Jamal say he is being extra careful with her. She senses it may be hard to hear herself described in that depressed state or simply difficult to hear Jamal is holding back and being extra careful since she likely wants him to show up more. Jamal seems to live with a sense of threat all the time

– fear that he could trigger her depression again; guilt that turned his back on her; and worry he cannot fulfill his strong desire to support her now in every way he can.

2. **Interruption and grounding:** Emily immediately interrupts, with, “Just a moment please” and takes a breath to ground herself and release the reactivity she feels toward Abbie for interrupting Jamal’s caring message. She attunes to each one’s sense of threat, particularly to Abbie’s sense of threat that Jamal still holds back.

Emily’s Bullet-Catching Process

Read her responses out loud to feel the full impact of her attempted to catch the aggression and to validate two persons under attachment threat.

1. **Interrupt escalation.** She interrupted, with “Just a moment, please”.
2. **Reflect present process without judgment.**

EMILY: Abbie, Jamal shared that he is frightened of making a move that could trigger you to slip into depression again and you stepped in to stop him.

3. **Reframe the reactivity by conjecturing at confusion, attachment threat, disorientation, or disbelief.**

EMILY: It is difficult to hear that he is so afraid of triggering your depression that he treads very carefully, yes? You don’t want him being so careful, is that right? You are just longing for him to show up more in the relationship. You don’t like to hear how carefully he treads not to do anything that will burden you, am I getting it?

4. **Validate the positive attachment intention.**

EMILY: You interrupt him, not to hurt him or dismiss his care for you; you interrupt to communicate, “Just be with me as you are. No need to tread so carefully,” do I get it? (To confirm accurate understanding.)

5. **Refocus conversation.**

EMILY: Can we go back to hear more about how Jamal’s fear seems to get in the way of engaging more with you?

Your Strengths and Discoveries about Catching Bullets

Compare your inner process and bullet-catching responses with Emily’s. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement as you attempt to catch aggression. After comparing your response with Emily’s, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

Catching Bullets Workout When Therapist Makes a Misstep

A therapist hears themselves say to a client from a typically marginalized group (for example, with a darker skin tone or visible disability), “You are amazingly articulate and accomplished!” Immediately the therapist realizes their faux pas and sees on the client’s face that this was a misstep. (This misstep is a common error, where someone from a dominant group is unaware of the implication that they are surprised that this person would be so talented.)

Your Version of Catching the Bullet to Repair the Rupture. _____

Emily’s Version of Catching the Bullet to Repair the Rupture

EMILY: I’m sorry. That was inappropriate of me to say that. I want you to feel safe with me to let me get to know you and help you reach your goals.

After any such faux pas that could convey aggression or exclusion, you can acknowledge a mistake but do not wait for a client to tell you it is ok or to “accept your apology.” When we hurt someone inadvertently, we hold the pain of that moment and then we move on to communicate respect and empathy and to foster and monitor the safety of the therapeutic alliance.

Seeding Attachment

EFCT Seeding Attachment Workout: Creating an Image of Attachment Injury Repair with Neve and Dominic

Context

Neve and Dominic, a highly escalated couple have been in therapy for several months. The smallest things like a slight increase in Dominic’s voice or the slightest frown on Neve’s face can trigger their partner into a frenzy of complaints and accusations. Dominic is highly defensive, very accusatory, and quick to say he doesn’t even want to be in therapy but is attending therapy only because Neve wants him to be there. This is a clear sign that he uses more avoidant and dismissive strategies to cope with threatening situations. Neve, on the other hand, is highly anxious, quick to roll her eyes, sigh in exasperation, and address Dominic’s faults, and equally quick to push for rebuilding their relationship. They have moments of closeness and connection that are also fraught with volatile fights, conflict, and distancing. Recently two ghosts of attachment injuries have emerged, helping to make some sense of the couple’s recurring escalation.

Client Expression

Read the clients’ expressions below out loud as though you were Dominic and Neve. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement to formulate a seeding attachment response.

DOMINIC: (With a stiff, guarded body and very rigid face with little expression.) I can tell you some of where all my harsh words begin. I've been living in a bubble of resentment ever since my emergency appendectomy surgery 5 years ago. I have not yet gotten over that! I thought I was going to die. I lay there in the emergency ward of the hospital for hours, waiting, waiting, with the worst pain ever. I thought I would die and you were not there. Terrified and in massive pain and you were nowhere! You were away on a girl's weekend and you didn't bother to come to me! I just can't get over it. My resentment bursts out all the time.

NEVE: (Showing little remorse as she listens to Dominic's story of resentment.) I just see red! What about my miscarriage? You may be forgetting, but I'm not! You said you couldn't stand the blood so you called my sister and went off to work. There I was totally abandoned by you while I endured the worst day of my life – losing our baby – terrified, heartbroken and you weren't there. (Voice breaks and she drops her head in her hands and weeps.) Dominic looks out the window.

Follow the prompts below to attune to each one in this heightened moment of newly disclosed distress, where your empathic reflections are regulating the distress enough that both partners are feeling seen and heard, by you at least, if not by each other. They do not feel heard by each other because they are triggering and getting triggered by each other.

Take a deep breath to imagine validating each one's resentment for the injurious events that shattered their trust that the other would be there for them in a moment of need. Take another deep breath to imagine appreciating each one for revealing their stories of broken trust, when in a moment of gravest need and vulnerability, the one they counted on to be there was not with them. Imagine the soothing or regulating effect that your empathic reflections and validating interventions can have, as you validate the resentment and shattering of trust that happened in those instances.

Imagining that your validations of their resentments and heartbreak, are providing some calming, follow the prompts to prepare to form a seeding attachment intervention that can simultaneously heighten and validate their broken hearts while also envisioning an interpersonal healing scenario.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Identify Dominic's core pain (anger, sadness, shame, or fear) in the attachment, relational context, for example, "angry that you..." _____

Resonate in your body to how you imagine that emotional pain – fear, sadness, anger, or shame or unmet longing must feel for him: _____

Identify Neve's core pain (anger, sadness, shame, or fear) in the attachment, relational context. _____

Resonate in your body to how you imagine that emotional pain – fear, sadness, anger, or shame or unmet longing must feel for her: _____

Find words to describe an interpersonal antidote to their collective attachment wounds. Create an imaginal scenario of how they could reach and respond in ways that would begin to rebuild trust. This is essentially then the map toward repair. _____

Your Seeding Attachment Intervention

Find the words to form a seeding attachment intervention, by validating the emotional pain and with repetition, heighten both the pain and the interpersonal reaching and responding that would be an antidote to the pain. Link an expression of the pain to a picture of receiving the very response that would soothe that pain. As with all conjectures, be tentative and check with the client that this is fitting for them: You may begin with, “It is difficult to imagine.” _____

Emily’s Inner Process and Attunement

Core pain: Emily identifies the core pain that Dominic is experiencing as the complexity of anger that Neve wasn’t there for him and heartbreak and sadness that at his most vulnerable moment ever, Neve was not there. Likewise, Emily identifies the core pain that Neve is experiencing as anger on the surface, that Dominic wasn’t there for her during her gravest moment of the miscarriage, and heartbreak and sadness that he was absent at her most vulnerable moment.

Bodily resonance: As Emily resonates in her own body to how she imagines they each feel, she feels a rush of anger in her chest that says, “I needed you – I counted on you – and you weren’t there!” Then she feels a crushing blow deeper and lower in the core of her body as she resonates with the shattering moment that the one they counted on disappeared in a time of need!

Interpersonal antidote: Emily identifies that the perfect antidote to this shattered trust and these broken hearts would be to share the stories, one at a time, of the shattering moments with openness and to experience the partner actually hearing and seeing them and feeling their pain and responding in a caring, empathic, remorseful way.

Emily’s Seeding Attachment Intervention

Read Emily’s response out loud to feel the full impact of the current pain and fear of never repairing these grave wounds of shattered trust and the heightened imagination of eventually healing the hurts together and rebuilding trust.

EMILY: You’ve both shared incredibly touching stories of events that broke the trust between you. It is very courageous of each of you to open these doorways into the incredible pain and agony you’ve carried inside, alone, without the other’s understanding or remorse for your pain. And all this pain has been covered with resentment and barbs at one another. Today we’ve slowed down the reactive pattern enough to hear the beginning of your stories.

It is difficult to imagine now, but we can slow down the reactive pattern, which you’ve named the *wicked carousel* again and again. And we can slow it down enough that one by one you can share your stories of heartbreak on that most vulnerable day when you needed the other to be there for you. Imagine, Dominic, being able to share

the core of your injury of being alone without Neve at the hospital and Neve being able to hear you and respond to your pain and being able to give you today what you have needed all these years. And Neve, imagine, being able to share the core sting of having your miscarriage without Dominic and him being able to listen to your experience and to feel your broken heart and to respond today like he didn't and couldn't back then.

I know you can't imagine doing that kind of sharing and listening yet, but we are getting there! You may not be able to imagine it yet, but when we get off what you call the *wicked carousel*, we can bring your bleeding wounds out in the open and together you can listen and respond in such a way that can you *redo* those dreadful events and find each other's support again.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and response with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with attempting to seed an imagined shift toward attachment security. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

EFIT Seeding Attachment Workout: Luca, Isolating and Withdrawing

Context

Luca is 35, a gay man who has been crushed and blatantly rejected by his large extended family since openly declaring his gay identity. In particular, his heart is broken from the rejection of his twin brother with whom he had always been very close. He struggles with anxiety and is isolating from everyone as a way to protect himself from any further rejection.

Client Expression

Read the client's expression below out loud as though you were Luca. Then follow the prompts to insert your inner process and attunement to formulate a seeding attachment response.

LUCA: I cannot say what I want to say to people. In fact, I get so anxious I often freeze, and I totally lose the words of what I may want to say. It is like a prison of my own making. I find I am annoyed a lot with anyone I see, but I don't let myself dwell on being annoyed. In fact, I mute all my feelings, all my thoughts so I don't evoke anyone's wrath or judgement. There is no way I can tolerate any more rejection or caustic comments or disparaging looks!

Follow the prompts to attune to Luca's fear and unmet longing. The prompts will help you to prepare to create a *seeding attachment* intervention that can help him sense an attachment interpersonal antidote to his fear.

Your Inner Process and Attunement

Core fear/longing: Identify the client's core fear or implied longing and attachment need:

Resonance: Resonate in your body to how you imagine that fear or unmet longing must feel:

Interpersonal antidote: Find words to describe an interpersonal antidote to the core fear or longing. The interpersonal response could be from the therapist, an imaginal other, or the interpersonal reach and response could be between parts of self.

Your Seeding Attachment Intervention

Find the words to form a seeding attachment intervention, by validating the fear and, with repetition, heightening both the fear or longing and the antidote to the fear. Link an expression of the fear to a picture of receiving the very response that would soothe that fear. As with all conjectures, be tentative and check with the client whether your words are fitting for them: You may begin with, "You could never imagine;" or "You could never." _____

After inserting your seeding attachment intervention, read it out loud. After this, compare your responses with Emily's below.

Emily's Inner Process and Attunement

Core fear/longing: Emily identifies Luca's core fear to be experiencing more rejection and explicit hatred for who he is as a person. An implied longing for acceptance is palpable. Also, she hears his fear of expressing what he calls annoyance, but which Emily senses as very legitimate anger.

Resonance: Emily resonates in her own body with enormous heaviness and tightness in her chest and abdomen as she tries to imagine how Luca's anguish and fear of more rejection and hatred must feel. As a heterosexual woman, she realizes she cannot fully imagine the fear and pain of anti-gay hate.

Interpersonal antidote: As Emily tries to imagine what interpersonal interaction could be an attachment antidote to Luca's fear and pain, she imagines Luca feeling safe to express his annoyance – even outrage – at this discriminatory behavior and experiencing another's understanding, warmth, and validation.

Emily's Seeding Attachment

Read it out loud to feel the full impact of the heightened fear and the heightened vision of how, specifically, an interpersonal interaction can soothe or transform this fear.

Option 1, with the therapist as the antidote interpersonal responder:

EMILY: At this point of feeling so alone and rejected it is almost impossible to imagine someone who would listen to your annoyance, even blatant rage and anguish, at the unfair rejection you are receiving just because of who you are! Perhaps it is even difficult to imagine that you could safely show me the heartbreak and rage and panic you must feel that it has not yet been safe anywhere to say, "This is who I am," and to see, in my eyes, tender, loving, acceptance, and celebration for who you are. Hard to imagine experiencing me fully welcoming you for who you are.

Option 2, with an imaginal other as the antidote interpersonal responder:

The above example used the therapist as the "other" in an antidotal interpersonal interaction of safety to express the annoyance that he conveyed as his present-moment experience. An alternative seeding attachment response with a non-specific imaginal other follows:

EMILY: Today it feels almost impossible to imagine someone who would listen to your annoyance, even blatant rage and anguish, at the unfair rejection you are receiving just because of who you are! Difficult to imagine that you could safely share who you are and your thoughts and feelings with anyone and to receive tender, loving, acceptance, and celebration for who you are. Hard to imagine the experience of anyone fully welcoming you for who you are.

Your Strengths and Discoveries

Compare your inner process and seeding attachment with Emily's. Your response may be very different from hers and that is ok. The important thing is to experiment with being aware of your inner process and attunement and with attempting to form a seeding attachment micro-skill that combines the core fear and longing with an imagined interpersonal interaction that soothes or transforms that fear – creating an imagined shift toward security. After comparing your response with Emily's, make a note of your strengths to celebrate and/or make a note of what you notice from Emily that you want to integrate into your style.

[Return to Contents](#)

Part 2.2

Support Material

EFCT Tango Workouts with Mei-Ling and Aki: Narrative Preview

This narrative is a preview of how you, in workouts of the EFT Tango, described in the book, *Workouts for Stepping into Emotionally Focused Therapy*, can facilitate the EFT therapeutic steps of change with Mei-Ling and Aki.

The first workout is a Move 1 workout, an opportunity to attune and identify the couple's pattern. Then we flow through two repetitions of workouts with Moves 2, 3, and 4, to help each partner own their action tendency in the dance and to disclose this acknowledgment in an engaged encounter. (Clients take Step 2.) With Move 4, we process that simple encounter of crystallizing their basic action tendency and position in their repetitive pattern.

The second round of flowing in attunement with Moves 2, 3, and 4 is to assemble and deepen in turn, each partner's core emotion that drives their moves in their typical dance or stuck pattern. (This facilitates a client's Step 3, identification of core emotion.) With Move 3, we help partners to disclose these core fears and with Move 4 we process each one's experience of the engaged encounters. While we can imagine many Moves 5 throughout each session and certainly at the end of each session, the first Move 5 in this set of Tango workouts will be a Move 5 to consolidate the stabilization/de-escalation change event (Clients' Step 4) and to pave the way into the couple's Stage 2.

As the couple enters Stage 2, more workouts will provide the opportunity to flow between Moves 2, 3, and 4 and to shape the two Stage 2 change events, engagement and softening. First will be a Move 2 workout with Aki, the more withdrawn partner, to linger with and deepen his core emotion/core attachment fear. With Moves 3 and 4, you will have the opportunity to shape an engaged encounter for Aki to share this fear and to process the engaged encounter for both partners. (That encounter facilitates clients to take Step 5. Processing the encounter with the receiving partner is akin to Step 6.) Another Move 3 will follow to support Aki to make the very unique engaged encounter of the engagement change event, where a client reaches out to request what they need to soothe and meet the needs embedded in their core fear. (Aka client's Step 7.) While many engaged encounters will have preceded this one, and much of the engagement from a more withdrawn partner happens incrementally, you will have the opportunity to shape this emotionally engaged request and see the importance of prompting an immediate response from Mei-Ling. This unique Move 4 processing where the recipient is invited to respond to the request before lingering in processing what it was like to receive this encounter is discussed.

To integrate the engagement change event, there will be a Move 5 workout. Following this, as the couple moves toward the second change event of Stage 2, there will be a Move 2 workout

to assemble and deepen the core fear of the more pursuing partner, Mei-Ling. After expanding and deepening her core fear, we will shape an encounter for her to share this fear with Aki (as in the client's Step 5) and then process this encounter with both of them. (Processing the encounter with the receiving partner is akin to Step 6.) From the depths of this core emotion, you will be guided to help Mei-Ling access and request what this fear tells her that she needs from Aki. With Move 3 and 4 you will have an opportunity to shape an encounter that is akin to Step 7, shaping a softening change event. We will imagine a special Move 4 where there is a prompt for an immediate response from Aki to Mei-Ling's vulnerable request. The Move 5 summary to heighten this watershed change event of EFT is heightened in conclusion as their newly secure bond and *broaden-and-build* pattern is integrated.

Definitions of each tango move and the micro-skills comprising each move are provided, along with prompts for making each move through the process.

[Return to Contents](#)