

Table 8.2 – The Recalibration Protocol

- 1. Suspend your negative judgments.** Don't buy into the feeling you may be having right now that your partner is the worst person in the world or that his behavior is inexcusably _____ (selfish, insensitive, clueless, irresponsible, inconsiderate, controlling, etc.)
Try saying something to yourself like:
 - "Maybe things are as bad as they seem, but maybe they aren't. There might be more to the story."
 - "I'm probably not in a good place to be objective about things right now."
- 2. Do what it takes to get to a place inside where you feel calmer and less frustrated.**
 - Remind yourself that even if things are as bad as they seem – it's not the end of the world. You'll figure out how to be okay.
 - Deliberately decide to stop trying to analyze the situation until you can get to a place inside where you feel calmer and less annoyed with your partner.
 - Relax your body, slow your breathing, and focus on something else for a while. Engage in an activity that requires your full attention. Focus on any mental thoughts or images that help you feel more at ease.
- 3. Once you are feeling calmer, remember that it is totally in your own best interest to find and acknowledge understandable things about your partner's perspective– even if you can't agree with the way he's acting.**
Remind yourself:
 - "I will have more credibility and influence if I can set my reactions aside for the moment and try to find and acknowledge understandable things about your partner's perspective."
 - "Just because I acknowledge understandable things about his perspective doesn't mean that I need to agree with it or go along with it."
 - "If I want him to understand my perspective, I need to understand his, too."
- 4. Now look for understandable things.** Could one of the following possibilities apply here?
 - Maybe your partner is operating on different information or assumptions than I am.
 - Maybe he doesn't mean what his words or actions seem to be saying.
 - Maybe he's reading things into my words or actions that I don't mean to be saying.
 - Maybe this is one of those frustrating-but-inevitable situations where we have legitimately different priorities or expectations, and neither of us is necessarily right or wrong.
 - Maybe there are things going on outside the present situation that are affecting how your partner is acting here.
- 5. With just the information you have right now...**
 - What is something that could be at least partly understandable about his perspective?
 - What underlying want or need might he have that could be as legitimate as your own?
- 6. In an upcoming conversation, what words can you use...**
 - to convey open-mindedness and genuine interest in understanding his perspective, or
 - to acknowledge understandable or valid things about his wants, needs or perspective?
- 7. Think about compromise in advance.** Assume for the moment that even if you have a respectful discussion with your partner, you may still not be on the same page with your wants, needs, or expectations. What is one possible suggestion you could make that would be an attempt to give equal weight to both of your perspectives?