

Five Secrets of Effective Communication (EAR:)*

E = Empathy

1. **The Disarming Technique (DT).** Find some truth in what the other person is saying, even if it seems totally unreasonable or unfair.
2. **Empathy.** Put yourself in the other person's shoes and try to see the world through his or her eyes.
 - **Thought Empathy (TE).** Paraphrase the other person's words.
 - **Feeling Empathy (FE).** Acknowledge how the other person is probably feeling, based on what she or he said.
3. **Inquiry (IN).** Ask gentle, probing questions to learn more about what the other person is thinking and feeling.

A = Assertiveness

4. **"I Feel" Statements (IF).** Express your own ideas and feelings in a direct, tactful manner. Use "I feel" statements, such as "I feel upset," rather than "you" statements, such as "You're wrong!" or "You're making me furious!"

R = Respect

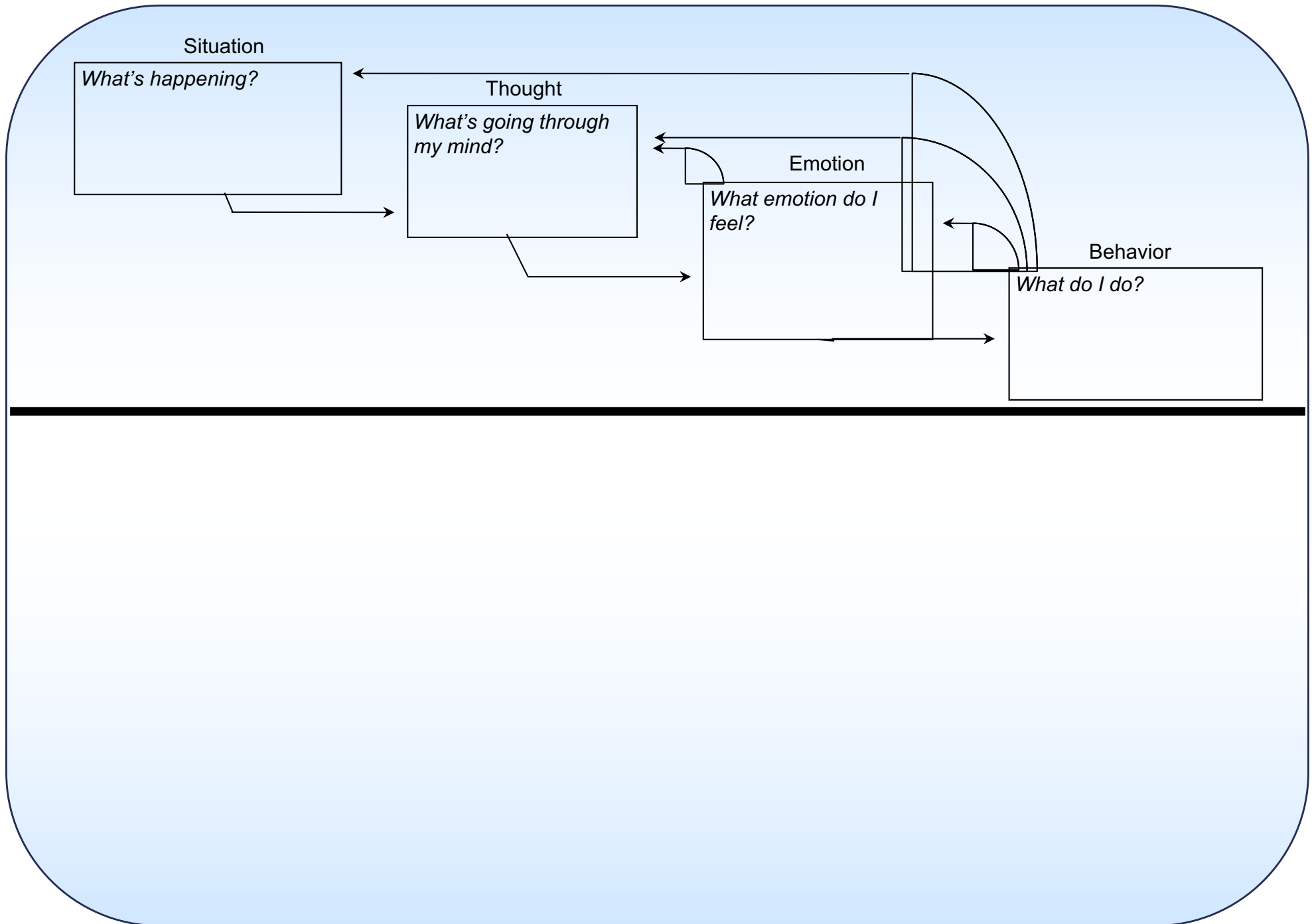
5. **Stroking (ST).** Convey an attitude of respect, even if you feel frustrated or angry with the other person. Find something genuinely positive to say to the other person, even in the heat of battle.

Cognitive distortions, definitions, and examples.

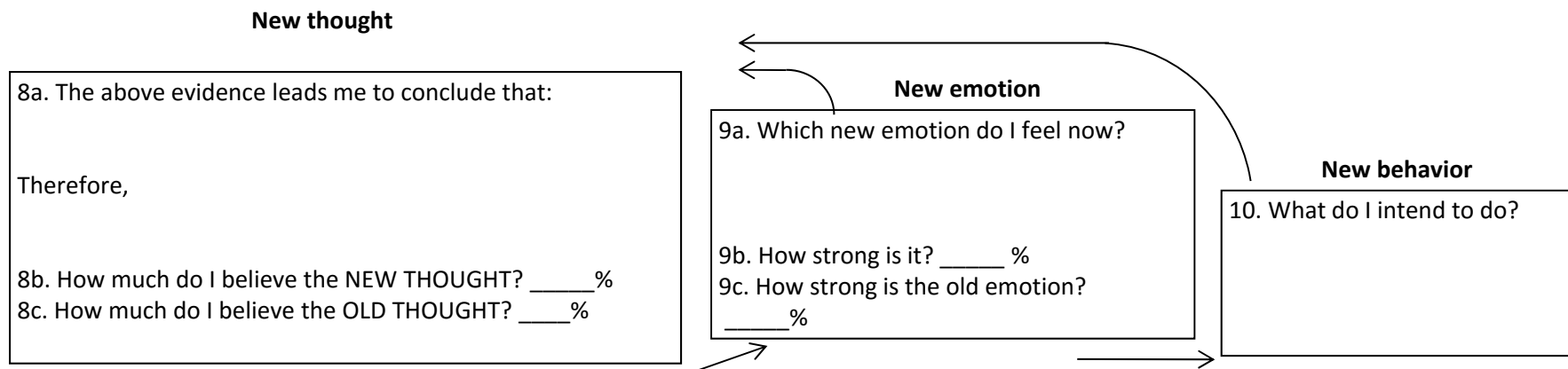
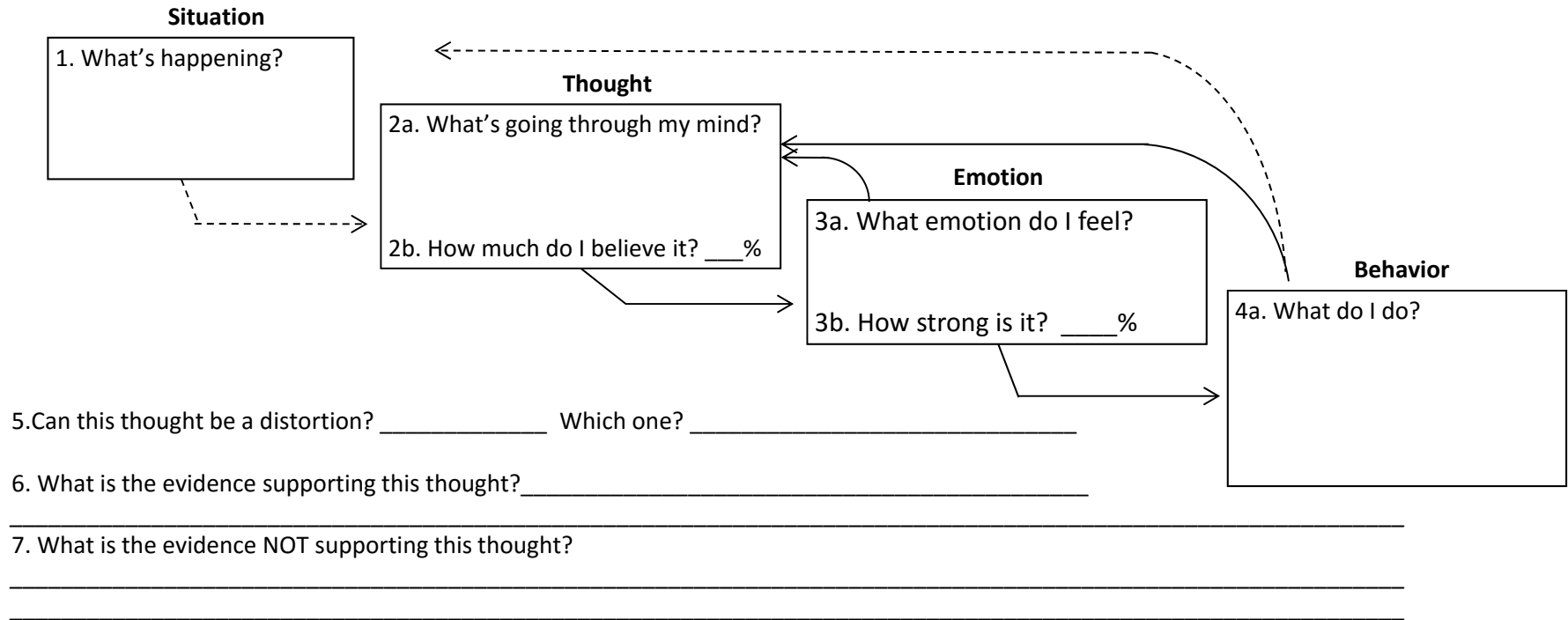
Please read the list of definitions and examples of cognitive distortions below, so that you can learn to identify your own examples. Write down these examples in column 4, under "My examples."

Cognitive distortion	Definition	Examples	My examples
1. All-or-nothing thinking	I see events and people as "all or nothing" or "black or white," and don't consider the gray areas.	"If I don't get an A, this means I failed my test." "Either I'm able to study all the subject matter, or I might as well not even try." "My Mom didn't give me the present I wanted. She doesn't like me."	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
2. Fortune telling (also called catastrophizing)	I guess the future, as if I had a crystal ball, usually predicting the worst.	"I'll be nervous and do poorly on the test." "The principle called me to the office. I'm in trouble." "The party will be awful."	_____ _____ _____
3. Discounting positives	I discredit or decrease the merit and positive things that happen.	"I only got a good grade on the test because it was easy." "My Mom was happy because I helped her, but it was nothing more than my duty." "Passing my final exams wasn't a big deal; anyone can do that."	_____ _____ _____ _____
4. Labeling	I put a stamp, a label or a tag, usually negative, on myself or others.	"Maria is a snob." "Paulo is rude." "I'm stupid." "I'm a failure."	_____ _____
5. Mind reading	I believe I can guess what people are thinking or that they can guess my thoughts.	"Alice didn't call me because she doesn't want to go out with me." "From the looks on my teacher's face, I got a bad grade." "Jane walked by and didn't even look my way. She must be mad at me."	_____ _____ _____ _____
6. Overgeneralizing	I generalize and exaggerate things by using words like "always," "never," "all," "nothing," "only," etc.	"Nobody likes me." "I can't do anything right." "My parents never understand me."	_____ _____ _____
7. Jumping to conclusions	I jump to conclusions and do things hastily, without taking a better look at what's going on.	"I did badly in the first quarter. No use continuing, I'm going to quit school." "If he didn't reply to my message, it's because he doesn't care about me." "If he looked at my girlfriend, it's because he is flirting with her."	_____ _____ _____ _____
8. Blaming (others or oneself)	I blame others for what happens to me, without considering my responsibility in the situation.	"My parents are the only ones to blame for my unhappiness." "It's the teacher's fault that I got a poor grade." "I arrived late because my mom didn't wake me up."	_____ _____ _____ _____

The Cognitive Model Diagram



Detective of the Mind



One Minute Drill

The Talker can say anything he or she wants for approximately 30 seconds. When the Talker has finished, the Listener will summarize what the Talker just said, as well as how the Talker was feeling inside, as accurately as possible. The Talker now gives the Listener a grade between 0 percent and 100 percent to indicate how accurate the summary was. If the grade is below 95 percent, the Talker will point out what the Listener missed or got wrong.

Once the Listener summarizes the part that he or she got wrong, the Talker will give the Listener a new grade, which will usually be higher. Do this until the Listener's grade is at least 95 percent. Then you can do a role reversal-the Talker becomes the Listener, and vice versa. The Talker can continue with the same topic or move on to something entirely new.

Talker Instructions

When you're the Talker, your job will be to express your thoughts and feelings. You can discuss problems you've had a hard time talking about. This is your chance to say anything you want, but remember to limit yourself to about thirty seconds without rambling on and on. Thirty seconds of emotionally charged information will be sufficiently challenging for your partner.

Because your partner will be listening attentively, you won't need to express yourself in an overly powerful or harsh way. You can express your feelings in strong, clear, direct language, but you won't need to shout, exaggerate, or put your partner down.

Listener Instructions

While your partner talks for thirty seconds, sit and listen respectfully without interrupting. Look into your partner's eyes and convey a receptive attitude. Avoid grimacing or using negative body language. Try not to appear judgmental or defensive. Don't slouch down in the chair and fold your arms defiantly against your chest, because this conveys antagonism. Don't roll your eyes towards the ceiling, or shake your head back and forth, as if to say, "you're full of it."

Your job is not to agree or disagree with your partner. Instead, try to understand exactly what he or she is saying. If you like, you can take a few notes. This can help a great deal because you'll be able to jot down the main points and won't have to struggle when you try to remember what your partner just said, but don't bury your head in your notes. Look up at him or her from time to time. After your partner has finished talking, summarize what he or she said as accurately as possible. Try to mention all the key points, and then comment on how he or she is likely to be feeling.

When you're the Listener, try to see the world through your partner's eyes. Don't make judgements about who's right and who's wrong. Don't attack your partner for the way he or she feels. Instead, try to grasp where your partner is coming from. Summarize exactly what

your partner said so that he or she will see that you listened and got the message. Remember to acknowledge how your partner might be feeling, given what he or she said.

If your partner gives you a grade of 95 percent or better, it's time for a role reversal. If your grade is lower than 95 percent, ask your partner to tell you what you missed or got wrong. Listen attentively while he or she speaks. Then paraphrase your partner's words again. Continue the process until your score is 95 or better.

When you've both had at least one turn as Talker and one turn as Listener, you've completed the exercise. You can either stop or continue for another round. If you decide to continue, you can talk about the same topic or another problem. It makes no difference.

The first time you try to summarize what your partner said, you may get a low score. This is normal. Don't worry about that, because you'll get up to speed quickly. Once you've tried this exercise a few times, you'll find that you can nearly always get ratings of 95 percent or better on the first or second try.

You and your partner can refer to these written instructions the first few times you practice. After you've practiced once or twice, you won't need the written instructions anymore.


Relationship Journal

Step 1 - S/he said: Write down exactly what the other person said. Be brief:	Step 2 - I said: Write down exactly what you said next. Be brief:
Check the emotions S/HE might have been feeling	Check the emotions YOU were feeling
<input type="checkbox"/> Sad <input type="checkbox"/> blue <input type="checkbox"/> depressed <input type="checkbox"/> down <input type="checkbox"/> unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad <input type="checkbox"/> blue <input type="checkbox"/> depressed <input type="checkbox"/> down <input type="checkbox"/> unhappy
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious <input type="checkbox"/> worried <input type="checkbox"/> panicky <input type="checkbox"/> nervous <input type="checkbox"/> frightened	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious <input type="checkbox"/> worried <input type="checkbox"/> panicky <input type="checkbox"/> nervous <input type="checkbox"/> frightened
<input type="checkbox"/> Guilty <input type="checkbox"/> remorseful <input type="checkbox"/> bad <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed	<input type="checkbox"/> Guilty <input type="checkbox"/> remorseful <input type="checkbox"/> bad <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed
<input type="checkbox"/> Inferior <input type="checkbox"/> worthless <input type="checkbox"/> inadequate <input type="checkbox"/> defective <input type="checkbox"/> incompetent	<input type="checkbox"/> Inferior <input type="checkbox"/> worthless <input type="checkbox"/> inadequate <input type="checkbox"/> defective <input type="checkbox"/> incompetent
<input type="checkbox"/> Lonely <input type="checkbox"/> unloved <input type="checkbox"/> unwanted <input type="checkbox"/> rejected <input type="checkbox"/> alone <input type="checkbox"/> abandoned	<input type="checkbox"/> Lonely <input type="checkbox"/> unloved <input type="checkbox"/> unwanted <input type="checkbox"/> rejected <input type="checkbox"/> alone <input type="checkbox"/> abandoned
<input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed <input type="checkbox"/> foolish <input type="checkbox"/> humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> self-conscious	<input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed <input type="checkbox"/> foolish <input type="checkbox"/> humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> self-conscious
<input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless <input type="checkbox"/> discouraged <input type="checkbox"/> pessimistic <input type="checkbox"/> despairing	<input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless <input type="checkbox"/> discouraged <input type="checkbox"/> pessimistic <input type="checkbox"/> despairing
<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated <input type="checkbox"/> stuck <input type="checkbox"/> thwarted <input type="checkbox"/> defeated	<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated <input type="checkbox"/> stuck <input type="checkbox"/> thwarted <input type="checkbox"/> defeated
<input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> mad <input type="checkbox"/> resentful <input type="checkbox"/> annoyed <input type="checkbox"/> irritated <input type="checkbox"/> upset <input type="checkbox"/> furious	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> mad <input type="checkbox"/> resentful <input type="checkbox"/> annoyed <input type="checkbox"/> irritated <input type="checkbox"/> upset <input type="checkbox"/> furious
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):

Relationship Journal

Step 3 – Good Vs. Bad Communication: Was your response an example of good or bad communication? Use the EAR Checklist to analyze what you wrote down in Step 2.

E.A.R. Checklist*

	Good Communication	✓	Bad Communication	✓
E = Empathy	1. You acknowledge the other person's feelings and find some truth in what s/he said.		1. You ignore the other person's feelings or argue and insist s/he is "wrong."	
A = Assertiveness	2. You express your feelings openly and directly.		2. You fail to express your feelings or express them aggressively.	
R = Respect	3. Your attitude is respectful and caring.		3. Your attitude is not respectful or caring.	

Step 4 – Consequences: Did your response in Step 2 make the problem better or worse? Why?

Step 5 – Revised Version: Revise what you wrote down in Step 2. Use the "Five Secrets of Effective Communication." If your revised response is ineffective, try again.
