

REAL EYES REALIZE the Power of "Grounding Statements"

Tool Description – Tell Me More ...

"That's interesting" is one of many possible grounding statements to work as a trigger interrupter. Grounding statements can be words, quotes, phrases, or anything that grounds you when you feel triggered.

Staying calm in any situation has been proven to keep our body chemistry in check and this means we can make more clear and conscious decisions. Neuroscientists say it takes 6 seconds for stress hormones to start pulsing from our brain to our body and when that happens, the flood of hormones and brain chemicals start to invoke our defense mechanisms of fight, flight or freeze. Physical and social pain light up the same part of the brain and it's important for us to operate with the brain in mind. In this way, we can pivot from fear to conscious choice.

Grounding statements work as interrupters when the brain thinks a situation or person is a source of danger or pain. We want to invite the executive decision-making part of the brain (prefrontal cortex) to be online and check-in with our emotions without having them run the show. When the emotional center of the brain (amygdala) is on fire, we typically react vs. respond to the situation.

How Does It Work? ... Examples ...

When something happens or you hear news that is triggering, go straight to telling yourself, "How Exciting!" or "Isn't that Interesting?" or "Hmmmmmmmmm". All you need is one to act as your go-to and it makes the experience of being triggered more approachable and light-hearted so conscious actions can happen.

- Your car is hit in a fender bender. You are ok, but you are late for an appointment and this is the last thing you need in your day. Instead of ranting in anger and potentially walking into moving traffic (which has happened – the accident after the accident), start by saying "That's Interesting" then define what is the best, next thing to do.
- A person who has been interviewing for a new role at a desirable company and made it to the last round of interviews finds out the team decided it wasn't the right fit. Rather than go into a state of despair or low self esteem, try, "Wow, I wonder what's going to happen in the next chapter of my life – Isn't this interesting?" and identify what you can learn from the situation and how best to move forward.
- A family member is mad at you for something you said or did. You think they are blowing things out of proportion and feel yourself getting defensiveness. Step back and say or think, "Hmmmmmmm" to spark your own feeling of curiosity for how/why they may be feeling the way they do, then think of open questions to understand their viewpoint and listen.