

Finding the Understandable Part: Common “Hidden” Reasons

This page will help you with Step 3 (Find the Understandable Part)
of *THE SEQUENCE*

Because the understandable reasons for _____’s feelings, intentions or motivations will not always be obvious, it’s to your advantage to become good at finding the reasons that are sometimes difficult to see at first. Here’s a list of possible reasons that might make _____’s thinking or actions more understandable to you:

1. Maybe _____ didn’t realize how important the issue is to you.
2. Maybe _____ was having a bad day.
3. Maybe _____ had a lot on her mind.
4. Maybe _____ didn’t have all the facts.
5. Maybe _____ was acting this way because she felt mad at you about something else.
6. Maybe _____ was operating on different assumptions or information than you.
7. Maybe _____ was reading something between the lines that you didn’t intend to be saying.
8. Maybe you are reading something between the lines that _____ didn’t intend to be saying.
9. Maybe the issue was more important to _____ that you previously understood.
10. Maybe _____ wasn’t upset so much about this particular situation as she was about where she feared things might be headed.
11. Maybe _____ felt threatened by you in a way that you didn’t understand.
12. Maybe _____ was afraid she was going to lose something very important to her if she did things the way you wanted.
13. _____’s actions are crucial to her way of feeling stable. Maybe _____ would feel anxious or unstable if she tried doing things your way. Maybe _____ has a different way of coping in life than you do.
14. Maybe _____ just has really different priorities or expectations than you do. Maybe she was acting perfectly consistently with her priorities. You just don’t like it because they are different than yours, but that doesn’t make them *wrong*.
15. Maybe beneath _____’s seemingly inexplicable or provocative behavior, there’s something legitimate that she’s going after. There’s something bigger at stake for _____ than is immediately apparent. There’s a legitimate need, dream or priority that _____ is trying to preserve or obtain. This need, priority or dream is probably one that isn’t as important to you, but that doesn’t make it wrong.
16. Maybe _____’s actions or attitude are a reaction to feeling dismissed or “written off” by you.
17. Maybe _____’s actions or attitude are partly due to your inability to stand up for yourself without putting him down in the past (see *Developing Non-Judgmental Explanations for _____’s Attitude or Actions*).
18. Maybe _____’s uncooperative or critical attitude is partly due to her feelings that you just don’t like her very much lately, or her feeling that you don’t care about her feelings (see *Developing Non-Judgmental Explanations for _____’s Attitude or Actions*).