

PLANT PEAS

Creating Emotional Safety & Effective Communication

CORE IDEA: TWO THINGS ARE TRUE

In any disagreement, both perspectives can be valid simultaneously. Instead of trying to prove who's right, recognize that you can both see the same situation differently. Move toward understanding each other's viewpoint first, then work together to find solutions that address both perspectives.

Like a seesaw, instead of standing on opposite ends arguing your points, move toward the center. Put your foot on your partner's side first to understand them, then invite them to join you in the middle where solutions happen.

OVERVIEW

PEAS is a method to create emotional safety and connection in conversations:

Paraphrase their point

Empathize with their feelings

Ask questions to understand deeper

Share your experience without triggering conflict

WHY THIS WORKS

PEAS interrupts defensive patterns by creating safety and connection. When you reflect what someone says, they feel heard. Empathy builds bridges. Questions show genuine interest. Sharing your state clearly without blame allows your partner to hear you without becoming defensive.

DAILY PRACTICE

To master PEAS, regularly check in with yourself throughout the day:

Identify your **SenseWord** (physical sensations).

Recognize your **MoodWord** (emotional state).

Clarify your **WantWord** (underlying desire).

Use PEAS in all your relationships and in everyday situations, not just triggered moments. This practice helps you respond succinctly and authentically when it matters most.

PARAPHRASE

Repeat accurately what you heard your partner say. Avoid interpretations.

Sentence Stems (examples in grey)

1. “**So, you’re saying** that when I came home late without calling, you felt forgotten.”
2. “**It sounds like you feel** overwhelmed with handling all the household tasks.”
3. “**You’re concerned because** the financial decisions are being made without your input.”
4. “**In other words, you feel like** your opinions aren’t being valued.”
5. “**You wish that** we could spend more quality time together on weekends.”
6. “**So, your idea is** to divide responsibilities more evenly.”
7. “**You’re hoping for** more advance notice when plans change.”

Tips

- Summarize the key points without adding your own interpretation
- If you’re not sure you understood: “I think I understand, did you feel... ?” Or “Did I get that right?”
- Pause if you need to: “I want to make sure I understand you. Give me a moment.”

EMPATHIZE

Acknowledge their feelings by relating from personal experience.

1. “**That must have been hard for you when** I dismissed your concerns.”
2. “**I can imagine how frustrating it feels when** plans change last minute.”
3. “**I see, that must have been really** disappointing.”
4. “**You must have been really happy that** you accomplished what you set out to.”
5. “**That sounds like a tough situation to be in.**”
6. “**That makes sense to me. I can understand why you’d feel** overlooked. I’d feel the same way.”
7. “**That sounds like it was a** rewarding experience for you.”

Tips

- You don't need to agree with their perspective to validate their feelings
- If you can't relate: "I can't fully imagine how that feels, but I want to understand."
- Focus on their experience, not on defending yourself

ASK

Ask open-ended questions to better understand your partner's perspective and feelings.

1. "What came up for you when I came home late?"
2. "When you said you felt unsupported, what specifically made you feel this way?"
3. "What are some ways I can help you feel more included in decisions?"
4. "When in the past have you felt like this before?"
5. "What's been the most challenging part of this situation for you?"
6. "How would you like us to handle situations with our parents differently in the future?"
7. "I want to hear more – how did it feel to experience that?"

Tips

- Ask to understand, not to lead them to your conclusion, fix or make things 'positive'
- Give them time to respond without interrupting
- Listen to their answers instead of planning your next question
- Avoid phrasing that could be answered with "yes," "no," or a single word.

Apologize if needed: "I'm sorry if that made you feel dismissed. That wasn't my intention."

Appreciate their openness: "Thank you for being honest about how you've been feeling."

Be patient; allow them space and time to respond. Repeat this until your partner feels seen and heard. Then use the sharing format on the next page.

SHARE

(Use StateWords. SenseWord + MoodWord + WantWord)

Share your experience without triggering defensiveness by first using StateWords:

SenseWord

1. “As you were sharing, I felt my shoulders drop.”
2. “When we argued, I felt a tightening in my chest.”
3. “I feel a flood of tingling energy and my hair is standing on end.”

MoodWord

1. “I felt sad and disappointed in myself.”
2. “I felt hurt and misunderstood.”
3. “I feel excited and thrilled for you.”

WantWord

1. “What I want is to be the partner I know I can be.”
2. “What I want more than anything is for us to feel safe sharing anything with each other.”
3. “What I want if for you to know just how proud I am of you.”

Full Examples:

“When you mention feeling alone in decisions, my throat feels tight. I felt guilty. What I want is for us to make important choices together.”

“As you shared that, my breathing slowed down. I felt relieved. What I want is for us to understand each other better.”

“When you raised your voice, my muscles tensed. I felt defensive. What I want is for us to discuss issues calmly.”

Tips:

Keep it brief and succinct. Avoid blaming language like “you made me feel...”
Share only your state, not your story or interpretations.

FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

Once both people feel fully heard:

1. “What ideas do you have for addressing this together?”
2. “Here’s something I was thinking might help... What do you think?”
3. “How can we find an approach that addresses both our concerns?”
4. “What’s something we can try for the next week to see if it helps?”

Focus on solutions that address both perspectives, not just compromises.

IF COMMUNICATION BREAKS DOWN

If the conversation gets derailed, remember your own need to be heard and understood:

“I’d really appreciate if you could let me finish sharing my experience.”

“I think it’s important we each get to share fully without interruption. Can we try again?”

“Maybe we should take a short break and come back when we’re both ready to listen.”

“Let’s revisit this when we feel calmer. How about in an hour?”

MAKING IT WORK

You might need to repeat the **P-E-A** steps several times before moving to **sharing** and **solutions**.

Don’t forget to practice identifying your StateWords regularly throughout the day.

Use this approach for small issues first before tackling major conflicts.

Consistency is key. The more you practice PEAS, the more natural it becomes, even in challenging moments.