Levels of Self-Validation

1. **Acknowledging:** The most basic level of self-validation is simply acknowledging the

presence of the emotion rather than judging it; for example, telling yourself, *I feel unhappy.*

Just acknowledging or naming the emotion and putting a period on the end of the sentence

rather than going down the road of judging it validates the emotion.

2. **Allowing:** The second level of self-validation is allowing, which is essentially giving

yourself permission to feel the feeling; for example, telling yourself, *It’s okay that I feel*

*unhappy.* This takes not judging the feeling one step further, affirming that it’s okay to

feel this way. This doesn’t mean liking the feeling or wanting it to hang around; it just

means acknowledging that you’re allowed to feel the emotion.

3. **Understanding:** The highest (and hardest) level of self-validation is understanding.

This level, which goes beyond not judging the emotion and saying it’s okay to feel it,

involves having an understanding of it; for example, *It makes sense that I feel unhappy, given the*

*difficulties I have managing my emotions and the chaos this causes in my relationships and my life.*