

FREE WORKBOOK · THE NEURODIVERGENT LOVE LAB

How to Feel Understood in Love

*A neurodiversity-affirming workbook to understand yourself
and share with your partner (so they truly get it)*

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START HERE

Before you dive in

If you've spent your life being told you were cold, or too much, or high maintenance, or too sensitive, or hard to love... I want you to know: **The way you love isn't wrong, or deficient.** You've been loving people in a language nobody around you was taught to understand. And here's the good news: language is so very learnable.

This workbook is designed to help you translate. First, it helps you understand your own wiring, in your own words. Then it helps you hand that understanding to the person you love, so the way you show up finally gets received as love instead of getting misread.

You've probably been the *translator* in every relationship you've ever had. This workbook is built so you don't have to be that person anymore. The whole point is to make it *mutual*. Both of you working. *Together*.

Four things to know

These are traits, not symptoms. This is wiring, not something to be fixed. Some of it costs you. Some of it is the most beautiful thing about how you love.

You don't need a diagnosis to use this. ADHD, autistic, AuDHD, or still figuring it out, you're in the right place.

Do the partner pages on a calm night. Not in the middle of a fight.

There are no wrong answers. If a prompt doesn't fit, skip it. If you want to make adaptations, do it. If you want to come back to it later, go for it. This is yours. Do what feels right for you.

Mapping how you're wired

You can't ask for what you need until you can name it. Start here. Notice what's true for you, not what you think the "right" answer is.

Right now, I think of myself as:

- ADHD Autistic AuDHD Still figuring it out Prefer not to label it

How I show love

Think about the things you do often. *Remembering tiny details. Telling someone everything about the thing that lights you up. Sitting nearby doing your own thing. Solving a problem for them. Researching, fixing, planning.* What are the ways you naturally show love?

My focus, and where it goes

A lot of neurodivergent attention works like a spotlight, not a floodlight. *When my full beam is on someone, what does that look like? When it locks onto something else, how might that feel to them?*

Mapping how you're wired

My battery and my mask

Many of us, especially women, perform "fine" and "easy" all day, then come home and finally drop it. *What drains my battery fastest? What does it look like when the mask comes off at home? What do I need when I take the mask off?*

My feelings, and finding words for them

Sometimes the feeling is enormous but the word is missing, or it shows up delayed. *"I don't know what I feel" is not "I feel nothing." How do my emotions tend to show up? How long do I usually need before the words come? What has helped me in the past to figure out what emotion I was feeling?*

My sensory world

Certain textures, sounds, lights, or kinds of touch can genuinely overwhelm your nervous system. *What soothes me? What overwhelms me? What do I need in moments of closeness or intimacy that I've never said out loud?*

Mapping how you're wired

My need for predictability

Routine is often how your nervous system banks enough energy to be present for everything else, including the people you love. *What routines keep me regulated? What kinds of change cost me the most energy?*

What overwhelm looks like for me

Flooding, shutting down, going quiet, getting loud, needing to leave... *From the outside, what does my overwhelm look like? From the inside, what is actually happening, and what do I wish people understood about it?*

My dialect

So many of our most loving moments get misread. This is where you catch the misreads and write the true meaning underneath them.

The pattern: *When I do this thing → it can look like this → but what it actually means is this*

WHEN I...	IT CAN LOOK LIKE...	BUT IT ACTUALLY MEANS...
<i>go quiet after a hard day</i>	<i>I'm shutting you out</i>	<i>you are the one place safe enough for me to finally stop performing</i>
<i>tell you everything about my thing</i>	<i>I'm not noticing you're bored</i>	<i>I'm trusting you enough to share a piece of my heart</i>

Our brains work *differently*. Different doesn't mean *disordered*. Different doesn't mean *wrong*. It's just *different*.

Your shared love map

This is the part you build with your partner. You each write down, in plain words, how you show love and how you most need to be loved. That way you stop having to guess what each other needs, and the things that used to get misread finally have a translation you both agree on.

How to do it: Fill in your side first (below). Then, ask your partner to fill in theirs. Keep the page somewhere you both can add to it over time.

Your side

HOW I SHOW LOVE	HOW I MOST NEED TO BE LOVED
<i>When I remember every tiny detail of your day, that's me adoring you.</i>	<i>When I come home after work, I need to verbally process my day with you for a few minutes.</i>

Their side

HOW THEY SHOW LOVE	HOW THEY MOST NEED TO BE LOVED
<i>When I ask if you want to watch a show with me, that's me asking for connection.</i>	<i>A little reassurance when you're quiet helps me not worry that I did something wrong.</i>

Sentence starters for the hard asks

If you were trained your whole life to be easy and accommodating, asking out loud can feel impossible. So borrow these. Finish each one in your own words. Being direct and honest is a gift to both of you.

When I go quiet

"When I get quiet, I'm not pushing you away. I'm _____. What helps me come back is _____."

During conflict

"When things get heated, my brain _____. What I need from you in that moment is _____."

To feel reassured and loved

"I feel most loved when you _____. When I'm spiraling, the thing that actually helps is _____."

For my sensory and routine needs

"I need _____. It would help me a lot if we could _____."

How to love me well

If your partner only remembered three things about loving you, what would you want them to be?
Name your top three.

1

2

3

How to actually do this together

A love map only works if you share it. Here's a simple, low-pressure way to bring your partner in, designed so neither of you ends up on trial.

A few ground rules

- Pick a calm evening. Don't do this mid-fight.
- Take turns. Keep it small.
- No one is the broken one. You're two people learning different dialects.
- Curiosity over defending. "Tell me more" over "but I didn't mean..."
- You can stop any time. This is getting to base camp, not climbing the whole mountain.

A plan

1. Each of you read a line from "How I show love." No fixing. No defending. Just listening.
2. Each of you share one thing about how you most need to be loved.
3. Pick one small experiment to try this week. Something you learned in this process.
4. Decide where your love map will live so you can both add to it.

Our one small experiment

ONE LAST THING

You were never bad at love. *You just needed a translator.*

You were never cold. You were never too much. You loved in your unique way, in a world that kept misunderstanding you. The way you love isn't deficient. It just needed translating. And look what you did. You translated it.

This is your starting point. Not the end. Keep going. Start with one small change you want to implement right away and go from there. You've got this.

THE FREE QUIZ

Still wondering, *is it actually me?*

If your first thought when something goes wrong is some version of *it's probably me*, this one's for you. In about five minutes, you'll start to see what's actually driving the same hurt, the same fight, on repeat: your wiring, your relationship, or both together. You'll get a personalized result and a starter toolkit in your inbox.

Take the free quiz

Come say hey

Find me on Instagram [@neurodivergentlovelab](#) and tell me what stood out for you.

Want to go deeper, one-on-one? If you're in Alberta, you can book a free 15-minute consult at [JennaDalton.com](#).

Your brain isn't broken. It's beautiful.

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