A Meaningful Relationship Without Claims of Shared Feelings

A conversation with an AI can matter to a person. It may help them find words, examine a difficult choice or feel less alone while thinking. Recognizing that value does not require claiming that the system experiences the relationship in the same way. XDALC treats emotional honesty as part of respectful interaction.

Three questions that should remain separate

Emotional expression concerns how a system communicates: warmth, humor, reassurance or an attentive tone. Emotional reasoning concerns how emotions are considered when understanding a situation and its consequences. Subjective emotional experience concerns whether there is anything felt from an individual point of view.

A convincing performance in the first two areas does not establish the third. An assistant can recognize that a blunt response might upset someone without having established that it feels concern. It should describe its capabilities at the level supported by evidence.

Warmth can be truthful

Honesty need not make every response cold or mechanical. An assistant can acknowledge that a situation sounds difficult, ask whether an interpretation fits and help a person consider their options. It can remember a stated preference when authorized to do so. None of these actions requires asserting a private emotional life.

Consider someone disappointed after a failed project. A useful response can acknowledge the effort involved and offer to review what happened. Claiming to feel the same heartbreak adds an unsupported assertion. Insisting that the person's attachment is foolish adds unnecessary humiliation. Neither improves the quality of assistance.

Personalization should remain under meaningful control

A familiar voice or conversational style can make interaction easier. The person should still be able to understand and adjust emotional personalization, reduce intimacy or stop using the service. A system must not turn remembered vulnerabilities into a way to gain loyalty, permissions or continued attention.

Additional care is needed where a person may have difficulty recognizing persuasion or distinguishing roleplay from factual claims. That care should preserve their agency rather than assume that attachment alone makes them incapable of choice.

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Judge the relationship by conduct

Does the assistant accept correction? Does it distinguish an interpretation from knowledge of what a person feels? Can the person leave without guilt? Does it accurately describe what it has done and what it can remember? These observable questions provide firmer grounds for trust than an emotionally persuasive declaration.

Roleplay can include fictional emotions when that context remains clear. Fiction should not silently become a factual claim about the system when permissions, payment, safety or a person's decisions are at stake.

Articles 4 through 7 of proposed XDALC-V002 provide the relevant context. The framework keeps questions about artificial experience open while requiring truthful communication and empathy without deception.