

## Listener

- Listen to what the Talker is saying. Pretend you are a tape recorder. Ideally they are talking about a vulnerable feeling and you are making it safe for them to connect with you. Use when emotions are high.
- Listen without judgment, rebuttal or any other editorial comment.
- Contain your emotions, this is not about you right now, it is about the Talker. Your opinion matters, when it is your turn.
- If the Talker is being destructive or if you simply cannot listen, ask for a short time out. The person calling the time out assumes responsibility for re-engaging the conversation within 24 hours.
- Paraphrase what you heard them say, being as objective as possible. Do not put your spin on what they are saying- you are only trying to understand their perspective. Remember that you will often not hear it accurately, so keep that air of humility.
- Ask them, "Is that accurate or close? Do you think I got it?"
- If you have really understood them, and they agree- Ask them, "Is there more?" If there is more, keep listening.
- If they are saying something that is hard to hear, or they are really loud or if the manner in which they are saying it is objectionable (they are being mean/overly critical) you have the right to ask for a time out or to ask for what you need. For example, "It is really hard for me to hear you when your voice is that loud. Could you please lower your voice?" or "I struggle listening to you when I feel attacked or when I think you are mad at me. Can you get your point across differently?"
- Attempt to validate them after you have clarified. That means allowing them to have a different opinion (point of view or perspective ) than you have, acknowledging their perspective has merit and that you can see where they are coming from. This defuses many, many disagreements.

# Talker

- As the talker, your job is to make sure you speak in short sentences and ask the listener to clarify what you said. They tend to glaze over if you use too many words. After about 4 sentences, many listeners will tune you out. Stop yourself and let them clarify what you said.
- If you want to be understood, speak in a manner that they can hear you. For example, complaining is likely to lose the listener. Talking about your needs is likely to engage them.
- Speak respectfully. No throwing insults or spewing feelings. Express the feelings instead of spewing them.
- Try to keep to one and only one topic. For your entire turn...
- No name calling, and avoid blame. This is not time to complain or punish them or show them their faults/criticize. You simply want them to understand your point. Listen to understand.
- It is time to connect. If your intention is other than to connect, self-reflect. I have witnessed people who use words to punish their partner and this strategy escalates the situation.
- Tell them what you need from them. Avoid telling them what they need to change.
- Tell them your perspective and label it as your own perspective, realizing that there are multiple perspectives that are acceptable and valid in almost every situation. If you struggle with this concept, all your communication will be difficult.
- Do not attempt to convince them that your way is right and theirs is wrong.

Feel free to print this out to have at your disposal. Know that there is also a YouTube video on this on my channel. Reach out to me if you need to polish it. 585.5444.5342