

Communication Skills for Couples (Intro)

The goal of this exercise is to promote communication – that is to say, listening, hearing and understanding. You do not have to *agree* with what you hear. Remember that understanding *does not equal* agreeing.

1. Face each other, get as close as you are comfortable with.
2. Pick a neutral topic, not one that has been a hot issue (contentious) for you as a couple. Something like “this is what happened in my day” may be a safe place to start.
3. Decide who will speak first and who will listen first.
4. **Speaker** – Share something that happened in your day. Do not give more than 3 – 5 sentences to start with.
5. **Listener** – Once the speaker has stopped, you repeat back what you heard (you are not to *respond* to what was said, you are just *repeating* back what was said). Ask the speaker if you got everything that had been said.
6. **Speaker** – You will either confirm that the listener captured it all, or you will say that he/she missed something and repeat what was missed (please do not add new details to your story). The **Listener** can then repeat back what had been missed and ask for confirmation again. When the **Speaker** is satisfied that he/she was heard, he/she may indicate this.
7. **Listener** – Once the speaker has indicated satisfaction you can ask the speaker if they would like to go on. Repeat process several times.
8. Switch Roles.

Homework:

1. Practice the above using neutral topics.
2. When you feel ready, practice using a warm topic (stay away from the hot, contentious issues for now).

help is here



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