

Deep Listening Process

Full Instructions

- Speaker shares their experience in **bite-sized chunks**
 - Use as many skillful communication tools as you can muster (eg. using “I” statements, naming feelings as feelings and stories as stories, etc.)
- Listener **repeats back** what they’ve heard
 - Make sure to preserve important keywords and convey genuine comprehension
 - Listener asks:
 - **“Did I get that right?”**
 - If not, speaker clarifies, listener replays back again and asks, “Did I get that right?”
 - If the speaker says yes, listener then asks, **“Is there more?”**
 - Continue in this way until the Speaker says, “No, that’s everything.”
- When Speaker is done (when they’ve “emptied their cup”), the Listener shares:
 - **Kernels of Truth:** whatever you heard in what they shared that you also see, believe, and/or can agree with
 - **Validation:** recognition that their experience makes sense to you, that you can understand why/how they’d feel that way, etc.
 - **Amens:** especially if there were kernels of truth related to your behavior, offer amens for whatever you can *genuinely* apologize for, and ask:
 - 1) What you can do to repair the connection now
 - 2) What you can do moving forward to change things for the better in the future
- Do not go right into doing the process in reverse - give the speaker time to integrate before asking them to come back and do Deep Listening in return.

Condensed Instructions

1. Speaker shares their experience one bite-size chunk at a time
2. Listener replays what they heard
 1. Asks, “Did I get that right?”
 2. Asks, “Is there more?”
3. When speaker is done, Listener shares:
 1. Kernels of Truth
 2. Validation
 3. Amens

Big-Picture Pointers

When you’re in the role of the listener, you’re practicing the skill of stepping completely outside of your personal opinions, feelings, and position. This is NOT to say that your position is wrong or that you’re abandoning it in favor of your partner’s. What you are practicing is the ability to *temporarily* leave your position and fully inhabit (and thereby understand) theirs. This is NOT an exercise that determines right or wrong; it does NOT assess who is at fault or who to blame. The SINGLE point of this practice is to learn how to fully hear someone else, *even and especially* when you don’t agree with them, when their words paint you in an unflattering light, when you think it’s unfair, and so on. The practice will help you cultivate non-reactivity in the face of others’ strong emotion about you, which is the point of most power in any relationship; it lets you retain access to your higher capacities of wisdom and compassion, rather than being dragged into your own defensiveness. Lastly, people *really* appreciate when they’re given the space to fully empty their cup and be genuinely heard. Sometimes deeply listening to and deeply understanding someone who is mad at you is *all* that’s needed to resolve the conflict. People are usually shocked and grateful when you don’t immediately move to defend yourself. Because in truth, there’s nothing to protect.