

LISTENING BEYOND THE WORDS

WORKSHEET #6

"It is sad how quickly some couples move from the attentive unmarrieds to the preoccupied marrieds" – Ann Carroll

Good listening requires: TIME, ENERGY & QUIET

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

1. Give full attention to spouse who is talking (including non-verbals).
2. Reflect back what you think you heard (including feelings).
3. Check for accuracy.
4. Repeat steps 1 – 3 until spouse feels heard.
5. Reverse roles and repeat with other spouse talking/listening.

"Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable." – Augsburgers.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Self:

- Do I reserve time and energy for my spouse? How good a listener am I?
- Do I create an accepting atmosphere which encourages my spouse to communicate?
- What ways do I use to avoid listening?
- In what ways do I tend to scramble?
- Do I always make sure what I have heard is what my spouse means?

In Relation to My Spouse:

- If my spouse seems to be avoiding listening to me, what might this suggest about my manner of communicating? (Is it mostly negative, critical, complaining, blaming or demanding?)
- Could a change of my attitude help open channels of communication?
- If necessary, do I insist on my right to be equally heard?

SUGGESTED EXERCISE

Every evening take 10 minutes to practice reflective listening to the question: "How was your day?" Gradually expand the technique to include troublesome issues.