

This material has been gathered from many resources including thousands of married couples from many parts of the world.

Series compiled by Frank O'Sullivan

A resource for couples who are married or who are approaching marriage.



Staying Married

Listening

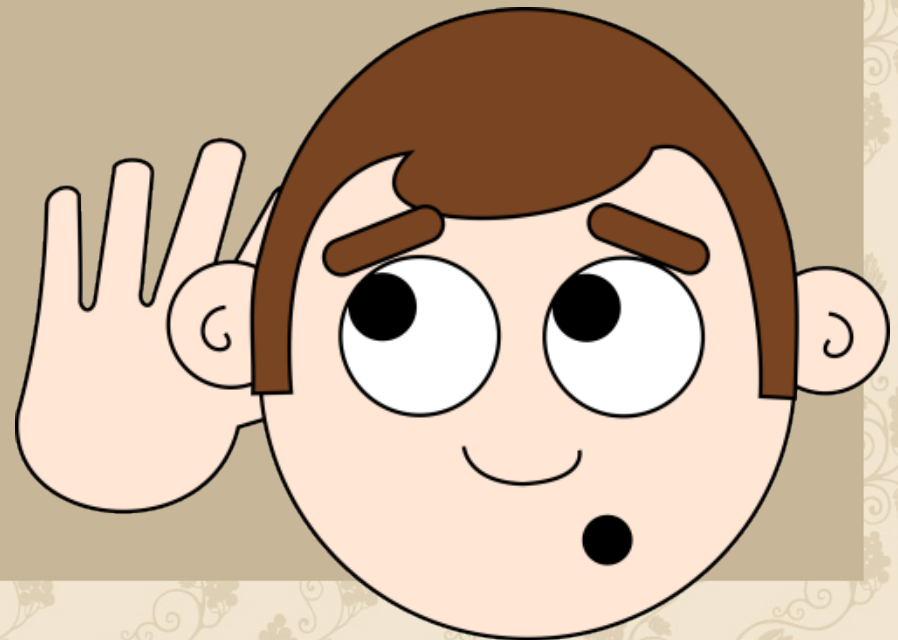


LISTENING

COMMUNICATION requires talking and LISTENING.

We all have a huge need to be listened to.

We need to learn HOW TO LISTEN



LISTENING

I need to listen to what is going on in your life.
How well do you listen to each other?



Blah,
Blah,
Fluffy



LISTENING

Are you really LISTENING...
...or just hearing words?



...well I think
that was my
name being
mentioned!



LISTENING

Since we believe that practice makes perfect, we have some short exercises which illustrate the important aspects of listening. You may think some of them a bit odd but bear with us please.

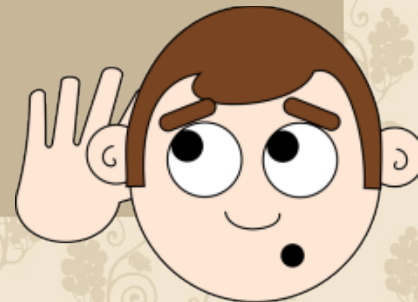
EXERCISE 1



Work with another person of the opposite sex, **NOT** your partner.

Place your chairs back to back with that other person.

Do that now.

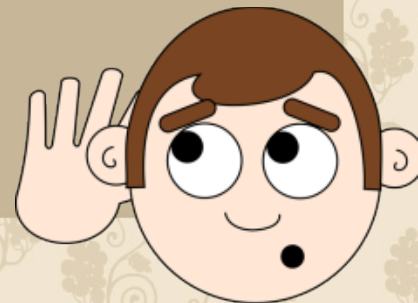


LISTENING

All ready?

Now, one of you speak for a minute about the ways you like to spend your time e.g. some sport, hobbies, interests etc.

Start now!



LISTENING

What did you notice? How did you **feel**?

Talking brings out the need to turn our bodies towards the person speaking and to look at them. And for the speaker to see the listener's face.



LISTENING

EXERCISE 2

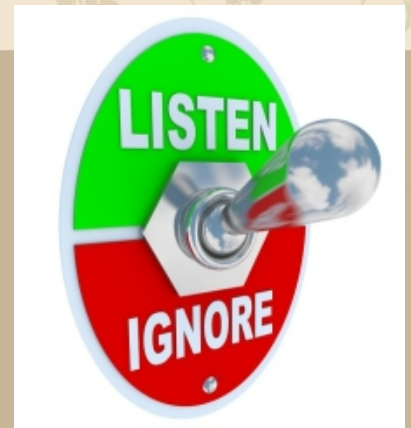
Now turn and face each other.

This time the other person will be the speaker.

Describe what you did last weekend. BUT the listener must not look at the speaker. Look

around, look at your watch or your mobile, study the ceiling, whatever.

You may feel rude, but try it for one minute. **Start now!**



LISTENING

How did you feel talking to someone who was not all interested in what you were saying?



LISTENING

EXERCISE 3

We will now give you an opportunity to practise

POSITIVE (ACTIVE) LISTENING

Gentlemen, rejoin your partners.

Ladies stay where you are.

Decide who will be the speaker for this exercise and who will be the listener.



LISTENING

Speakers, tell your partner about pleasant and unpleasant memories of school days.

Listeners, you should say very little. Just nod your head. Encourage your partner to say more by your facial expression. Make the odd comment to show you are listening. But DON'T tell your own own story.



Speakers, you have three minutes.

Start now!

LISTENING

EXERCISE 4

Listeners: relay back what you heard. In your feedback, don't say: "That reminds me of something that happened when I was at school..."

You CAN say "What you liked about school was..."

The idea is to convince your partner that you listened to every word they said.

Start now!



LISTENING

How did you feel talking to someone who **WAS** interested in what you were saying?



FEEDBACK

LISTENING

We shall now describe some barriers to listening.

Fear – you become frightened at what you are hearing and the emotional impact it may have on you: “Big boys don’t cry”

Reacting – we interpret what we hear as criticism and react by trying to justify and defend ourselves



LISTENING

BARRIERS TO LISTENING

Flight - not wanting to listen because of the demands listening may make on me

Research - listening **JUST** for information and not appreciating the person speaking.



LISTENING

BARRIERS TO LISTENING

Self centred - listening for affirmation/praise. It puts the focus on you and not on the speaker.

Analysing – listening but looking for ways you think the person needs your help, instead of just listening to the thoughts and feelings.



LISTENING

Listening is not a **PASSIVE** exercise – being just a like sponge soaking up what is being said.

Listening must be **ACTIVE**. We need to clarify what we are hearing, asking questions like:

“Am I right in thinking...?”

Or “Would you explain that feeling to me a little more...”

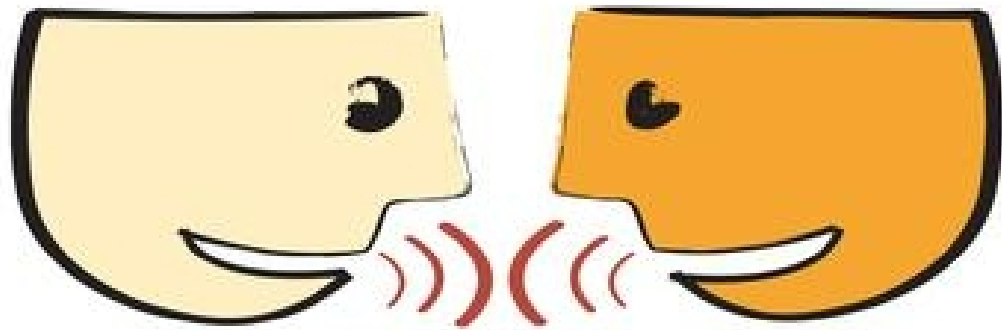


One of the most **sincere**
forms of **respect** is
actually listening to
what **another** has to say.

LISTENING

ACTIVE listening involves switching off from your own concerns. Make a conscious decision to listen in a caring way.

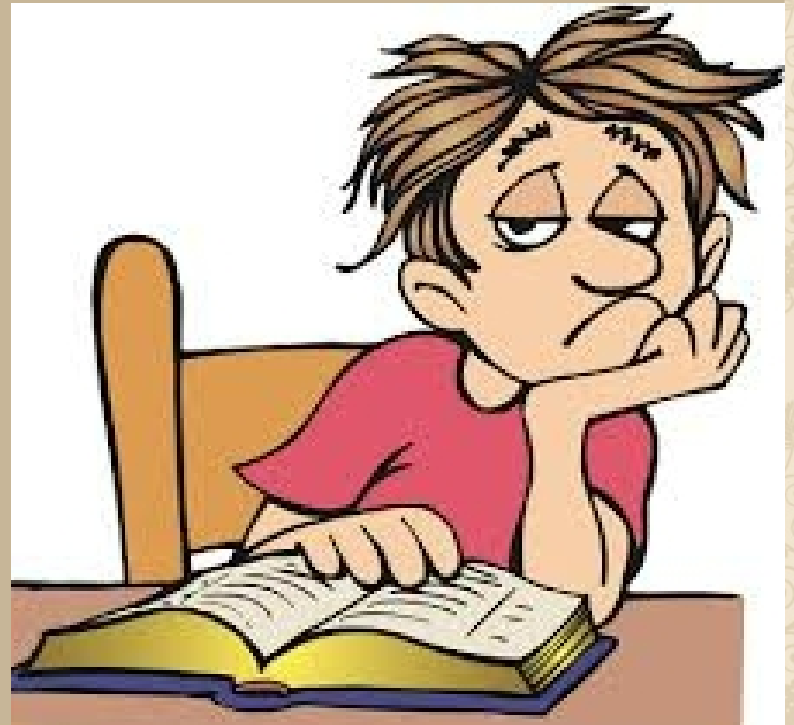
Face the speaker. Give them your full attention.
Make eye-contact



LISTENING

ACTIVE LISTENING

Watch for what the person is communicating non-verbally - **avoiding eye-contact** - **by body posture** - **looking bored**



LISTENING

ACTIVE LISTENING

What is (s)he feeling right now?

Listen to the FEELINGS behind the words –
get in touch with the PERSON rather than the
topic (s)he is talking about



LISTENING

ACTIVE listening

Once they have finished speaking, reflect back in your own words the FEELINGS you have heard, by saying

“You’re feeling.....because...”



LISTENING

SOME DON'TS

Don't interrupt or contradict the speaker

Don't offer advice or suggestions

Don't console or reassure the speaker – they need the chance to share what is going on inside them.

Giving advice may actually close them up and even make them feel worse.



LISTENING

ACTIVE listening

LISTENING IS A WAY OF LOVING.

It involves a **DECISION** to love, a love that the speaker EXPERIENCES as you listen to them right now.



LISTENING

MARRIED COUPLE'S SHARING

