

## Three Steps to Intentional Dialogue (Harville Hendrix)

### 1. MIRRORING

Those of you who know how to reflectively listen will recognize this step. Basically you mirror or reflect back as clearly and simply as you can what the other person is saying. Hendrix suggests you mirror as "flatly" as possible. What that means is as much as possible, mirror back what is being said **WITHOUT DISTORTION**. **Resist the tendency to explain, justify, defend, attack or solve problems.** You are just mirroring back what the other person has said in your own words. This step is more simple than most people make it, but it is also harder to do. (Not complex, but not easy)

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- a) So you . . .
- b) It sounds like you. . .
- c) So when. . . you . . .

### 2. VALIDATION

This is the process of letting the other person know that what they have said to you makes some sense to you, that it is logical. **The difficulty in this step is that sometimes what the other person is saying may not make sense, or you may not agree with them.** The beauty of this process is that you don't have to agree with them to be effective with this. Use phrases that are honest and validating.

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- a) Given what you have gone through, what you are saying makes sense. . .
- b) From your viewpoint, I can see that there is some logic in what you are saying. . .
- c) Now that I have heard more of your feelings, I'm starting to understand this. . .

### 3. EMPATHY

In this stage you explore and talk about how you can feel some response to what they are feeling. The focus is on talking about what the feelings are, and how they are felt. (Both your feelings and theirs)

Some useful lead-in phrases

- a) It looks like you are feeling. . .
- b) What is it like for you to feel so . . .
- c) How do you experience that feeling?
- d) That must be difficult to feel so. . . how does it affect your life?
- e) Listening to you this closely, I'm feeling some of your pain
- f) My heart aches as I listen to what you are feeling. . .

Cautions:

- 1) Stay away from agreeing or disagreeing.
- 2) Don't solve the problem. . . problem solving **NEGATIVELY impacts this process.**
- 3) Work on not talking about yourself.
- 4) If you counterattack this process will shut down.