

**Antelope Springs
Basic Parenting Class
Session 7
“Listening and Talking to Your Child”**

1. Communication is the foundation to most relationships
 - a. Listening, the key to effectiveness (The Lost Art of Listening by Nichols)
 1. Listen for feelings
 2. Mirroring (Giving the Love That Heals by Hendrix)
 3. Validating
 4. Empathizing
 - b. Know the basics and then practice
 - c. Resources
2. How can I talk so my child will listen?
 - a. Speak with respect
 - b. You messages put others down
 - c. I messages show respect (own your own feelings)
 - d. Look for the real problem
 - e. Give choices when at all possible
3. Be careful when you are angry
 - a. Anger is a mask for fear
 1. Time out for yourself, remove yourself
 2. Look at what you are afraid of
 3. Nurture and support yourself before you work with your child
 4. Be centered and clear about your desired outcome with the child
 5. DON'T EMOTIONALLY LEVERAGE WITH ANGER
4. Sometimes just ask
 - a. Behavior change requests
 - b. Send positive I messages
5. Practice

Listening Skills Topics

The following are suggestions that might prove useful as you practice some of the listening skills that we have discussed today.

Express thoughts about the following:

1. Your most embarrassing moment.
2. How you felt when your father was angriest with you.
3. Remember a time when you felt most rejected.
4. Talk about your most joyous experience.
5. Your most disappointing time.
6. The most frightening experience.
7. A time when you felt really proud of yourself.
8. Your feelings about your favorite teacher.
9. How you feel that your life has been shaped by adversity.
10. A time when you overcame the odds to succeed at something.
11. How you feel when people confront you, using anger.
12. Your response to violence.
13. Every 2 seconds a child dies, usually from hunger, how you feel about that.
14. The emotions that you felt about how your mother treated you.
15. Talk about where you are at in your life.
16. Your worst fears.
17. The best surprise that you ever had.
18. How you feel about the person who loves you most.
19. A time of great exploration.
20. Remember your best friend in childhood...
21. Your most spiritual experience.
22. The greatest challenge you ever faced.
23. Talk about your first childhood memory.
24. The thing that bugs you the most.
25. Your fears of inferiority.
26. How you feel about your looks.
27. Life's injustices to you.
28. Talk about how you feel about the person you hate/dislike the most.
29. The best part of your character.
30. How you feel about your life.

"I MESSAGES"

I messages are used to convey feelings about certain situations. They are usually brief, to the point and work well in communicating your feelings, when used appropriately. Here are some hints at using them.

Basic Structure:

I FEEL... (INSERT YOUR FEELINGS HERE)
WHEN YOU/I ... (INSERT A DESCRIPTION OF THE BEHAVIOR)
BECAUSE... (INSERT THE REASON/RATIONALE)

I FEEL: avoid describing the situation, this is the place for expressing the feelings, the emotions, that you are experiencing. Many people start the "I Feel" statement with the phrase "I feel that.." as soon as you hear the "that" in the sentence you can be reasonably sure that you are not hearing feeling, but opinions instead.

WHEN YOU/I: make this behavioral, a description of the event or situation that evokes that feelings that you have. It is important in communication to include this step so that the listener knows the circumstances that triggered your response.

BECAUSE: when you include the "because" it is a way of clarifying why you feel the way you do. It is not a justification, but rather an explanation. It is important for both the speaker and listener to include this in the interchange.

Now practice using examples from your life:

1. I FEEL...

WHEN YOU...

BECAUSE...

2. I FEEL...

WHEN YOU...

BECAUSE...

Steps to Reflective Listening

1. Listen for feelings, **not the whats, whens, whos, whys**, etc.
2. Make statements very tentative. (ie, "could it be that you are feeling more anger than sadness?", or "does anyone know how alone you feel?"... etc.
3. Avoid interjecting judgmental, personal, "I" statements. Keep the interaction "you" focused. (ie, "I think that you are feeling sad" or "I know it must be really tough to feel that way." are both statements that pull focus toward you and away from the client.
4. NEVER talk your partner out of their feelings. A response like, "you should really be happy, you have your family that loves you..." or a similar statement conveys the message that THEIR FEELINGS AREN'T VALID AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD FEEL! If this is happening watch how quickly your partner spirals into more anger/sadness/shame, etc. The behavior of invalidating their feelings pours gas on the fire of pain, and instead of facilitating wellness the pain and loneliness is increased.
5. Affirmations are not a part of Reflective Listening, and in fact may sabotage the process. Remember that the only task is to hear and help clarify what they are experiencing.
6. You can respond using reflective listening to nonverbal behaviors as well as verbal output.
7. Stay centered and keep in mind that "less is more." Be brief and open.
8. Watch for RECOGNITION RESPONSE... it will tell you if you are on the right track. (sudden crying, an increase in the intensity level, a smile, a general body shift.)
9. DON'T TRY AND SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING IS JUMPING INTO PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUES. DO NOT DO IT. STAY WITH THE FEELINGS.
10. When you get stuck, comments like "help me understand what your despair feels like..." or "can you clarify what that terror is like for you..." can be very healing.
11. Refuse to take responsibility for your partner's feelings. Comments like "that must be tough for you," or "sounds like you have a deep problem", can help your partner focus energy internally.
12. This type of listening can really enhance or produce internal locus of control. If your partner does a lot of blaming, their control locus will be external. Most likely results will be victim/martyr, or "out of control" feelings. Reflective Listening can reorient that energy to a more useful focal point.

EVALUATION OF LISTENING

1. LISTENER STAYED WITH SPEAKER'S FEELINGS	1	2	3	4	5
2. LISTENER DID NOT "SOLVE" PROBLEMS	1	2	3	4	5
3. LISTENER SHOWED GOOD ATTENDING SKILLS;					
A. EYE CONTACT	1	2	3	4	5
B. APPROPRIATE POSTURE	1	2	3	4	5
C. APPROPRIATE TOUCHING	1	2	3	4	5
D. DID NOT INTERRUPT	1	2	3	4	5
E. LOOKED INTERESTED	1	2	3	4	5
4. LISTENER DID NOT INTERJECT SELF	1	2	3	4	5
5. LISTENER RESPONDED TO RECOGNITION REFLEX	1	2	3	4	5
6. PACING WAS COMFORTABLE	1	2	3	4	5
7. LISTENER WAS FACILITATIVE	1	2	3	4	5
8. LISTENER ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION	1	2	3	4	5
9. LISTENER USED VOICE EFFECTIVELY	1	2	3	4	5
10. LISTENER DIDN'T "BUY INTO" THE WHO'S, WHATS, AND WHERE'S	1	2	3	4	5

MEASURE OF SUCCESS KEY TO NUMBER CODES

1 = didn't "get it"

2 = needs improvement of either understanding technique or application

3 = average, needs some work

4 = extra effort, very good focus

5 = goal of listening well surpassed, superior response

GROWTH COMMITMENT

I _____, HAVE DECIDED TO IMPROVE THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF MY COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES. I WILL USE _____ TO HELP MONITOR MY PERSONAL PROGRESS.

A.

HOW I WILL DO THAT:

B.

HOW I WILL DO THAT:

C.

HOW I WILL DO THAT:

PERSONAL EVALUATION DATE:

WITH:

My Signature

Witness Signature

Three Steps to Intentional Dialogue (from Harville Hendrix, Giving the Love That Heals)

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 simpler 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 the emotions that are being felt. The focus is on talking about what the feelings are, and how they are felt.

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?

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.