

THE COUPLES CURE

Miraculous Recovery for Couples on the Brink

RADICAL LISTENING EXERCISE

Conscious listening always creates understanding. This exercise is more active than the Holding Space Exercise. This can be done as a separate exercise, or immediately after holding space and after they have expressed themselves to completion.

There are 4 steps to radical listening. The acronym is RASA: Receiving, Appreciating, Summarizing, and Asking.

1. **Receive:** Pay attention. Focus actively. Focus on the details that the other person is communicating. Be sure that your body language shows you are fully tuned in. eye contact, leaning forward, nodding, body still, etc. This also includes taking a pause. Radical listening is a judgment-free act of listening. If you feel your judgment is kicking in, pause to clear your mind and go back to your partner's words.
2. **Appreciate:** Small sounds to indicate you are with them. AH, or "Got it," "Oh, I see," "right," etc.
3. **Summarize:** So... say back what you heard to show you get it or to offer an opportunity to clarify. This is the reflective listening part. You repeat back what you heard with a minimum of interpretation. Your intention here is to indicate that you understand what they have expressed from their point of view. You do not need to parrot back what they said word for word, because that can be annoying or awkward, but in your own words state the basic content of their message and its meaning. Then, they can correct you if you have misunderstood and they can clarify.
4. **Ask:** Get curious and ask questions for the sole purpose of truly knowing them and understanding their point of view. What was that like for them? What are they feeling? What happened next? Tell me more...etc.

TIPS TO SUPPORT YOU:

- Prep your mind by telling it that you are communicating to understand the other person and not to win it. Only then should you enter into the conversation.

- Remain aware of your internal process as practiced in the Holding Space Exercise.

Notice when you are doing any of the following:

- o Judging or analyzing,
- o stating your opinion,
- o changing the subject,
- o drifting off,
- o positioning yourself,
- o agreeing or disagreeing,
- o offering advice, or
- o telling them what they should not do.

- Resist the urge to interrupt. Whatever thoughts you have can be tabled for later.
- Look for positive intent. This is essential for true connection. Find out what it is they deeply desire, why it matters, what is at stake, and their driving needs and values. Even what might feel like a criticism could be coming from a desire to create a greater connection.
- Replace overwhelming emotions with a reminder or self-soothing thought. For example: "I only have to listen, I don't have to win or fix things."
- If there are silent moments, consider them as healing points. It is in the silence that we can integrate, create, and restore. Stay attuned to what is happening in the moments of silence.
- Discard the usage of the word "but." There is never any reason to use this word in response to what your partner has shared. This word negates and minimizes what was previously said. Instead, say "And..." if you must say anything at all.

→ After you have had the chance to try this out (with or without your partner's awareness), write down answers to the following and submit this on the website.

1. What was the topic being discussed?
2. What did you do non-verbally to communicate your full attention?
3. How did you appreciate what your partner was saying? Did you give verbal cues that you were tracking? Did you nod or wear an open-minded facial expression?
4. How long did it take you to summarize, and did you get it right? What was the summary in a nutshell?
5. What questions did you ask to engage with curiosity and learn more?