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## The Listening Course

### LESSON 4 – Only one person at a time can feel understood

When you communicate something significant to your romantic partner, where you express a feeling, and some degree of importance about that feeling, you bring a whole history of past conversations. Your childhood history, previous romantic relationships, and the current relationship all have an impact on how you express important feelings, and how you listen to your partner. The goal is to help your partner calm down their frustration.

In this positive response from Michael, he hears the feelings that Jennifer is having now.

**JENNIFER:**

**I heard about a car accident tonight on the road that you drive, and you got home an hour late. I was really afraid you were in a car accident.**

**MICHAEL:**

**Oh wow, that must have been scary. Tell me more about that if you still need to.**

She is having these feelings now, about this past event. His good listening here helps her to feel accepted, validated and close to him again. She feels open to him, and feels safe if she needs to express something like this in the future.

If you begin debating about facts and ideas, this takes you out of the good communication that completes frustrating feelings, and you then will feel disconnected with each other. This response from Michael is an example of the start of an argument. It is very subtle.

**MICHAEL:**

**That's not even the road I take, and I was only 45 minutes late. You really didn't need to worry.**

Real-time listening is helping Jennifer feel understood, right now, that she was scared. If communication works well, she will feel less scared right now, about this event.

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