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The Listening Course

LESSON 3 – Positive communication happens in real time

This is the model conversation that keeps Jennifer and Michael feeling close.

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.

When a conversation like this goes off course into a negative conversation, most likely the two listening questions are not being remembered:

- 1) Do I understand the feeling that my partner is experiencing?
- 2) Do I understand how meaningful this feeling is to my partner?

Now let's look at Michael's negative response:

MICHAEL:

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

This first negative response is what leads to arguments. Jennifer might feel rejected, invalidated, angry, sad, and even hopeless if this happens a lot. Michael's response moved them out of listening for feelings, and the meaning of those feelings, in real time. Jennifer is not able to feel calmer by expressing her feelings to Michael.

The key to reconnecting is knowing how to REPAIR these conversations by interrupting the defensiveness.

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