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## The Listening Course

### LESSON 9 – Only a deeply sensitive approach will be heard

Jennifer’s response below, where she states she “was so scared tonight,” is a gentle response that would shift Michael’s response to be more positive. When Jennifer asks if she did something that frustrated Michael, this quickly stops the conversation from moving towards more criticism and defensiveness.

**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:**

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

**JENNIFER:**

I was so scared tonight that you might have been injured, because I love you. Did I say something that frustrated you?

In Jennifer’s response below, it is more direct, and Michael will hear it, unless they’re under a constant state of expecting criticism and defensiveness to occur. This is a vulnerable response, as she states her feeling.

**JENNIFER:**

It hurt that you said I shouldn’t worry.

If they are both in constant defensiveness, Michael could respond to the above statement from Jennifer by saying:

**MICHAEL:**

Well, I’m more hurt that you always bombard me with questions and problems right when I get home from work.

It’s unfair that Michael states that she ALWAYS does a specific thing; this is an unfair exaggeration. Michael also brings up another topic, which is unfair during arguments. The goal is to learn to bring up one topic at a time, which makes it much more possible to resolve.

Ideally, if you need to immediately bring up another topic during an argument, try to remember it or write it down; or you could even say to your partner that you need to take a moment to write down another issue you’re having, so you can come back to listening to them. The interruption of an argument by going off on these types of tangents... is what makes arguments never resolve.

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