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## The Listening Course

### LESSON 10 – Listen to each other, one at a time

Each time you communicate with your partner, you're either attempting to understand them or attempting to be understood. I cannot stress enough how nearly impossible it is when both of you are trying to be understood at the same time. So I'm suggesting that you need to have communication about who is seeking to be understood and who is doing the listening, the person seeking to understand. Listen almost as if you're in total agreement with what your partner is sharing.

**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 needs to listen for Jennifer's fear. He needs to not interrupt her communication with his own frustrations. His frustrations need to be discussed in another conversation, at a different time. When Michael interrupts and doesn't hear his wife's fear, he prevents the whole conversation from resolving, and it now has the potential to become arguing. Below, Jennifer criticizes Michael and responds defensively.

**MICHAEL:**

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

**JENNIFER:**

You're so in your head. Why do you always tell me not to worry? I didn't even say I was worried.

To avoid an argument like this, you must remember the two questions:

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

Michael needs to slow down to hear Jennifer's fear. Jennifer needs to slow down to hear Michael's overwhelm when he gets home from work.

So there are questions to ask each other the moment you feel resistance with each other.

- 1) Are we both frustrated right now?
- 2) Are we both trying to be heard right now?
- 3) Can we take this one topic and complete it so we don't fall into arguing?
- 4) Should I listen first, or do you feel like you can listen to me first? I will trust that later we will discuss my concerns.

Conversations move fast. Use my questions as a guideline for you to understand that connection only happens when we feel seen, heard and understand, one at a time.

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