

SPEAKER/LISTENER TECHNIQUE

A powerful, simple technique to help couples communicate well, respectfully, and safely during difficult conversations.

SPEAKER'S RULES

- Do not say too much at one time.
- Stop after each point, allowing your partner to paraphrase.
- Speak for yourself, using "I" statements.
- No mind reading.
- Stay on one subject at a time.
- Include how the event made you "feel."

LISTENER'S RULES

- Paraphrase what you hear the speaker saying and ask if you got it correct.
- Only ask questions to help you better understand what the speaker is saying.
- No editorials, comments, or rebuttals. Concentrate on listening.
- Validate your partner (i.e., "I see what you mean." "I can understand why you felt that way." "Wow, that sounds really frustrating.").
- Show you care about the speaker's viewpoint and feelings.
- You do not have to agree, just listen and show respect.
- The goal is to understand. Understanding does not mean agreement.

RULES FOR BOTH

- The speaker is the one with the floor.
- Speaker keeps floor while listener paraphrases.
- Take turns and share the floor.
- No problem solving at this stage.
- You can stop each other if something is not clear.

"Every one should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."

JAMES 1:19



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