

## **The Gift of Listening**

How often do you really feel heard by your partner? Do you feel understood? Listening is a skill that can be learned, but there are different ways to listen.

Being completely available to your partner to simply listen to what they need and want to say is important. No response is required from you, only to give your complete attention to listening to him/her.

How often are you in a situation where your partner is trying to say something and has trouble getting the point across? In this situation, you can help by asking open ended questions and being supportive. Avoid inserting your own opinion.

In practicing good listening skills, avoid making assumptions as to the other person's intent. Also, suspend whatever you are doing and give your attention to your partner when they are speaking. If you don't feel you understand what the person is saying repeat back to him/her what you think you heard.

Finally, what behaviors are indicative of poor listening skills? Negative body language such as crossing your arms, rolling of eyes, not looking the speaker in the face, and turning away are indicators of poor listening skills. Good listening is part of good communication, but it also requires you to be nonjudgmental. Good listening helps you to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.