

## **Heart Listening**

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(Revised: 24. October 2002 by Purna Steinitz)

### **FORMAT:**

Dyad process.

### **PURPOSE:**

Experience of really being heard.

### **SETUP:**

Buddies sit facing each other.

### **INTRO / BACKGROUND:**

*Begin by giving some coaching about deep listening and sharing.*

#### **Speaking**

There is distinction between sharing and reporting.

Reporting is talking about something, talking about who, what, why, and where.

Sharing is evoking the experience and speaking from within the experience. We call this speaking from the heart, communicating the essence of something rather than telling the whole story, speaking spontaneously about something and having it come out of our heart, rather than strategizing it in any way.

#### **Listening**

We call this listening from the heart or deep listening. It's a mindfulness practice. The object of mindfulness is the other person's voice and exactly what they're saying.

When we notice that other things are arising like our commentary, judgements, and distractions, then we return to the person's voice and what they are saying. Each time we return there's an effort to try to sink in deeper so that we listen deeply and really understand what they're saying, and take in qualities of who they're being, who they are.

One of our deepest longings is for someone to really "get" us, to really hear us, and this is one of the most profound gifts we can give to someone else.

### **INSTRUCTIONS / PROCEDURE:**

- Please get with a partner and sit in a chair facing them. Make sure you have enough space between you and your partner, and other sets of partners.
- Please sit in an upright position, with your hands face down on your upper thighs.

- Please everyone close your eyes and evoke of a time in your childhood when someone showed up in your life and they were affirming for you, they enjoyed you for who you were, took a stand for you, nurtured you, or in some way changed your life in a positive way when you were a child. You felt happy around them, and you enjoyed being around them. They weren't necessarily that way for you all the time, but they were that way for you sometimes. Remember back to this time, a time when you felt empowered, recognized, when you felt confident in what you were doing. If you can't remember such a person and such a time, just imagine what this would have been like if it had happened, or imagine someone you really did know as a child and what it would have been like if they showed up for you in this way.
- Once you are in touch with this experience, please open up your eyes.
- We need a Partner A in each group. Partner A raise your hand. Okay, Partner A, you go first.
- Partner A, tell Partner B about this person, about this experience and time in your life. Partner B, you just listen. Don't make any comments, try to limit your facial expressions, just be present to what Partner A is saying and listen. *Do this for three to five minutes.*
- *Take sharing from Partners A and B about what they experienced or learned from this.*
- Switch. Partner B, now you will tell Partner A about your experience of being affirmed by someone. *Do this for three to five minutes.*
- *Take sharing from Partners A and B about what they experienced or learned from this.*
- Partners A & B, close your eyes again. Evoke an experience where you've been able to show up that way for someone else, a time when you've been a real stand to nurture, to be there for someone else, unselfish, and what that was like for you. If you haven't had this experience, think about who you would like to do this for.
- Partner A, tell Partner B about this experience, about this time in your life. Partner B, you just listen. Don't make any comments, try to limit your facial expressions, just be present to what Partner A is saying and listen. *Do this for three to five minutes.*
- *Take sharing from Partners A and B about what they experienced or learned from this.*
- Do the same process again, but this time Partner B speaks and Partner A listens.
- *Take sharing from Partners A and B about what they experienced or learned from this.*

**DEBRIEF:**  
Sharing