

## Mirroring/Reflective Listening

**Note:** To begin with, practise this exercise by communicating a simple, neutral statement. This exercise may feel awkward at the beginning as it's not how we normally communicate, however, trying to stick with it will produce results!

1. Choose one person as the SPEAKER, the other as the LISTENER
2. SPEAKER: say a simple statement that begins with the word "I" and describes a thought or feeling.  
For example, "I woke up this morning and felt anxious about going to work."
3. LISTENER: if the sentence is too long or hard, ask them to simplify: "Could you say that in fewer words?"
4. Once a clear and simple sentence has been sent, the LISTENER simply repeats or paraphrases the message and asks if they understood correctly.
  - a) Do not try to psychoanalyse your partner or make interpretative comments; JUST REPEAT OR PARAPHRASE.
  - b) Example: "This morning you woke up feeling that you would rather stay home than go to work. Did I understand what you said and felt?" (Asking for clarification is important, because it shows a willingness to try to understand.)
5. SPEAKER responds by saying, "Yes, you did," or by making a clarifying statement, such as "Not exactly. I woke up this morning wanting to go to work but dreading what was going to happen."
6. This process continues until the sender acknowledges that what has been said and thought and felt has been accurately communicated.
7. Switch roles and communicate another simple statement.
8. This exercise will feel like an unnatural, cumbersome way of relating, but it is a good way to assure accurate communication and will feel more natural in time.
9. Practise this technique several times until you become familiar with it.
10. Once familiar with the concept, you could take it in turns to be the SPEAKER/LISTENER for 5 minutes each, or whatever time frame feels comfortable for you both.

11. When familiar, try doing the same but adding empathy.

Example: "This morning you woke up dreading what was going to happen at work. That must have been really difficult for you."

- This exercise is a helpful way of communicating so that both partners' feel heard and understood by the other.
- It is useful when discussing subjects that can be potentially contentious.
- It can help both partners to grow in expressing their feelings within a 'safe' environment.
- It can help both partners develop good listening skills.

Remember – The ability to truly hear another; is the ability to hear difference.