

Rules for the Share/Listen Exercise

- ♥ One person shares about whatever he or she wants to for ten to fifteen minutes. Listen deeply and reflect back as accurately as possible what the sharer is saying without defense, judgement, rebuttal, or any other editorial comment. The listener contains their “reactivity” as best they can. The sharer can correct the listener if he or she feels that the listener is missing the main points to make sure that they are heard and believed.
- ♥ There should be two 10 - 15 minute sessions scheduled per week, sometimes with a minimum of 24 hours between the sharing sessions. During the 24 hours off, there needs to be no comment on what the sharer discussed except in the share/listen format. This is only if the couple has a high “reactivity” to each other. To hold the right position is to destroy the relationship.
- ♥ Some couples can go two rounds with each other. Each 10 - 15 minute session ends with the listener doing empathetic reflections.
- ♥ Time-Out rule. If during a share/listen conversation, or any other heated conflictual situation, one member of the couple feels that the communication is too destructive to continue, they can call for an automatic Time-Out which stops the conversation immediately. The person calling the Time-Out assumes the responsibility for re-engaging the conversation within 24 hours.

Please remember that this clunky conversation exercise is simply designed to allow each person to discuss difficult and vulnerable thoughts and feelings in a safe manner, and to manage reactivity in the relationship. It is neither a decision making nor problem solving technique. Please don't judge the value of this exercise upon whether it makes you feel closer as a couple in the moment. It is the practice of not “reacting” and being defensive that matters.