

LISTENING FOR UNDERSTANDING GROUND RULES

Research studies on healthy relationships have identified “listening for understanding” as one of the critical skills in making any relationship (marriage, dating or parenting) work.

- The goal is to gain more understanding of the person with whom you are communicating – not to try and “win” that person over to your point of view.
- Only one person speaks at a time, and the speaker “has the floor.”
- Speak only for yourself using “I” statements. Don’t make broad statements like “Guys think this” or “Anyone can see that.”
- Keep statements brief and to the point.
- Don’t rebut what someone else with a different point of view has said; make your statement about you and your point of view.
- If you don’t understand what someone else has said, you may only ask clarifying questions. Examples of clarifying questions include:
 - Can you give more information about.....?
 - Can you give me an example of what you mean by.....?
 - What do you mean by.....?
- Don’t prepare your answer while another person is talking. If you’re doing this, you aren’t listening for understanding!