

## **COUPLE DIALOGUE (LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND) – SCREEN SHARE**

### **COUPLE DIALOGUE INITIATION**

- ♥ “I would like to have a couple dialogue. Is this a good time?”
- ♥ Why have a couple dialogue?
  - ❖ You just want to be listened to, and be understood
  - ❖ You are upset about something and want to discuss it with your partner (you could be upset about something going on (or not going on) in the coupleship, or it could be issues outside of the coupleship)
  - ❖ You want to discuss a “touchy” topic or issue that is affecting the coupleship
- ♥ Partners should sit facing each other (i.e., knee to knee). Choose a quiet place with no distractions (i.e., in a quiet room, no phones, no kids, etc.)
- ♥ Start with Serenity Prayer and Safety Guidelines

### **MIRRORING**

- ♥ SPEAKER initiates the dialogue by sharing one or two sentences at a time.
- ♥ LISTENER repeats back (reflects) what they heard without interpretation or editing.
- ♥ LISTENER can ask SPEAKER to slow down by raising their hand.
- ♥ LISTENER says something like, “What I heard you saying is...”
- ♥ LISTENER can prompt the SPEAKER by saying, “Is there more?”
- ♥ Mirroring ends when the SPEAKER has said all that they want to say.

### **VALIDATION**

- ♥ LISTENER validates the SPEAKER’S point of view; it is the SPEAKER’S interpretation of the truth.
- ♥ LISTENER validates by saying something like:
  - ❖ It makes sense to me that you would think that/feel that...
  - ❖ I can understand that...
  - ❖ I can see that...
- ♥ LISTENER is in service to the SPEAKER by suspending their point of view, feelings and thoughts.
- ♥ LISTENER is not defensive, nor do they try to point out where the SPEAKER is wrong.
- ♥ This is a discipline, which like any other discipline, requires practice.
- ♥ Validation ends when the SPEAKER feels validated.

### **EMPATHY**

- ♥ LISTENER starts the process by saying, “I imagine you would have felt...”
- ♥ LISTENER can list the feelings they heard the SPEAKER mention.
- ♥ LISTENER then guesses at other feelings and makes suggestions which the SPEAKER can confirm or mention other feelings that they had.
- ♥ LISTENER can at a certain point ask the SPEAKER if all the feelings that they had have been mentioned.
- ♥ It may happen that the SPEAKER will think of something else they want to say perhaps during the validation or empathy portions. The LISTENER should go through the mirroring, validation and empathy processes as before.

### **SPEAKER AND LISTENER CHANGE ROLES**

- ♥ Partners change roles and go through the mirroring, validation and empathy as before.
- ♥ The (new) speaker can talk about the same topic or any other topic they choose.