



COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

Here's a communication exercise you can try with anybody in your life. You can agree to try this with a friend or you can even play around with it without calling attention to what you are doing.

You can practice taking either side, and it's an especially good idea if you are talking about something the two of you don't entirely agree about. It goes like this:

1. Person A makes a statement (what s/he thinks, s/he feels, s/he wants, etc.). Keep it short. Speak for yourself only — don't assume you know what the other person thinks or feels.
2. Person B listens carefully to Person A. Don't interrupt. Focus on the other person's message.
3. Person B repeats back to Person A what they heard and asks if what they heard was correct. Stick to what you heard. Wait for your turn to give your point of view.
4. Person A either confirms or corrects.

It's simple, but it works. Slow down. Really listen. Get it right. Let the other person know you heard.

EXAMPLE:

Derrick: "You were almost an hour late last night when we were supposed to meet for coffee. I missed the end of the game and everything trying to get there by six. Then I sat there by myself for 45 minutes."

Cindy: "Oh, I see. You gave up part of your game just to be there for me, and I didn't even show up."

Derrick: "Yeah, and I sat there looking like a doofus that got stood up."

Cindy: "So it was a little embarrassing, too. Derrick, I'm so sorry. I really couldn't help it. Here's what happened..."