## LISTENING TO CONNECT – A BEGINNING FRAME

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<th><strong>Strive to...</strong></th>
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| **Staying open to hearing meanings that are different from yours or that may be challenging to hear** | • Suspend assumptions  
• Hear the exact words  
• Hear the feelings  
• Check to see if you have understood what the person meant to say, both the words and the feelings  
• Understand why this is important to the other person; what it means to them | • Thinking that a word or phrase means the same thing to both of you  
• Assuming you know the meaning the issue being spoken about has to the speaker  
• Speaking about what the issue means to you before the other person feels you have understood him or her |

| **Setting a listening context: preparing yourself, the other, and the context for a good conversation** | • Reflect on what is likely to protect or improve the relationship  
• Agree to have a conversation  
• Find a time and place that is agreeable to both parties.  
• Provide what each needs in order to participate well in the conversation? Location? Agreements? Other parties present or absent? | • Bringing up issues before you are clear about what you want the relationship outcome to be  
• Bringing up issues when you don’t have the other person’s attention. |
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| Listening to learn about the other           | • Be curious; assume you do not know about the other’s experience or their experience of their experience  
   • Ask why “X” is important to the person; pay attention to their exact words and ways of using language  
   • Ask for clarification of anything that seems confusing or obscure  
   • Find out what the other person wants you to “get.”  
   • Take time to absorb what you hear  
   • Reflect what you understand and check out if you have it right  
   • Ask if there’s something they’d like you to ask that you haven’t | • Assuming you know  
   • Making value judgements about “right thinking”  
   • Attacking, defending, or avoiding when you hear things that are vastly different from what you believe |

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| Assuming and invoking capacity   | • Assume you both can do this  
• Include each person’s hopes, wishes, and dreams  
• Think of, or invoke, a big picture, a super-ordinate goal  
• Recall times that things have worked well between you and the other person, and how that happened  
• Assume that asking genuine questions and responding thoughtfully to the other’s genuine questions can get you re-connected with each other, and that you can do this  
• Ask what you are missing if the person still does not feel heard | • Blaming  
• Explanations that cut off possibilities for change  
• Developing negative descriptions of the other; deciding they—or you—“can’t”  
• One-sided conversations  
• Giving up before trying several ways to connect |

| Listening for what the other wants acknowledged | • Notice what the other person values  
• Notice what you can genuinely acknowledge, and do so  
• Notice what you learn from hearing what they want acknowledged | • Confusing acknowledgement of another’s experience with accepting responsibility for it  
• Asking that you be acknowledged before acknowledging |
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| Separating listening to understand and learn from listening to develop solutions and to decide on actions | • Agree to keep these parts of the conversation — understanding and solution developing — separate  
• Work collaboratively to stick to this agreement  
• Imagine that listening to learn may open solutions that were previously obscure or non-existent  
• Speak fully and respectfully from a place of compassion and hope  
• Pause after a two-way conversation and reflect separately before shifting to talk about possible solutions | • Assuming that showing you understand the other person means you agree to do what they want (or vice-versa)  
• Moving toward solutions before there is clarity about what is important to each party |

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| | • Listen for any shared (super-ordinate) goal descriptions  
• Get imaginative, future oriented.  
• Give yourselves time | • Staying too narrowly focused  
• Going over past injuries  
• Forgetting what you have learned in the earlier discussion |

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