

Empathic Listening Skills

1. **Stop reacting** in the ways that hurt...(*the Four Horseman*)
 - **When you do catch yourself** reacting ...STOP and say: “I’m sorry, this is about me right now; this is not about you. I’m reacting... Let’s start over.”
 - Be authentically present and available, STOP avoiding intimacy.
 - Give it time. This will not resolve your fundamental conflicts, but it will teach you how to communicate in ways that lead to resolutions.
2. Learn therapeutic (healing) **communication skills**:
 - Present **Sensory Data**... “I saw, I heard...”
 - Present **Your Fantasy**... “I imagined/experienced that as...”
 - Present **Your Feelings** about the fantasy... “I feel/felt...”
 - Present **Your Preferences**... “I want, I would like...”

Bradshaw accurately points out here that any of *my interpretations of sensory data* is “**my fantasy**” about what is happening... we all have our own **mental filters** and create our own **map of the world** with “biased data”. [See the webpage “Reality Check” for complete details on this process.]

3. Be Honest, Open, and Willing (**HOW**) to do the work of love, including healing your own wounds if necessary.
4. **Examples:**

Empathic Listening... “I hear you say you are fine, but I see your fists are clenched and you are frowning. My fantasy is that you are upset. I feel anxious about that. I would like to know if I said or did anything to upset you.”

Validation... “**I see** your tears, **I hear** your crying, **I experience** that as deep sadness”