

COMMUNICATION EXERCISES

Step One: Identifying Problems & Concerns

Describe up to five concerns you have about your relationship, marriage, or life together in general

NOTE: This could be one issue with five parts, or up to five issues. Remember to deal with only one issue at a time.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List the feelings you have about each of these concerns:

- Concern #1 _____
- Concern #2 _____
- Concern #3 _____
- Concern #4 _____
- Concern #5 _____

Prioritize: Which concern needs to be attended to first? Second?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Step Two: Discussing Problems - Speaker/Listener Technique

Ground-rules

Really **Listen**

Try to **understand** your partners view

Take them **seriously**

Validate their feelings – This doesn't require that you agree with their interpretation.

No problem solving – this is a time to share your thoughts and feeling about a problem

Speaker has the floor – use an object as an anchor to represent “the floor”
(e.g. - TV remote, ink pen, etc.)

Share the floor

Speaker

Share your feelings about the issue at hand (From Step 1 – Identifying problems and concerns)

Allow pauses for the listener to paraphrase (repeat back what you hear the speaker saying)

Use the five elements of a clear message from the website.

Speak for yourself:

No mind reading

Use “I” Language

Listener

Listen; don't be thinking of what you want to say in response

No rebuttals, explanations, or defensiveness – don't act like an enemy.

Paraphrase – repeat what you heard the speaker say in your own words to clarify that you have the message. Use the five elements of a clear message to repeat back how you hear your partner.

That's it for this exercise... This is just to allow practice in communication and listening. Many times that's all that is needed.