

Relationship Rehab Show

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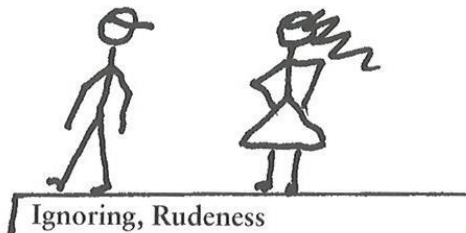
Are You Really Listening?

This episode is taken from Chapter 11, Learning to Listen in [How to Stay Married & Love It! Solving the Puzzle of a SoulMate Marriage](#) by Nancy Landrum and the [Millionaire Marriage Club](#) streaming course. These life-changing skills are also taught in [Communication Elixirs](#) a little book designed to show these skills applied in all relationships, not just marriage.

When Jim and I were in the worst of our marriage, neither one of us was even trying to listen to the other. Each was so convinced of the rightness of our respective positions that all we wanted to do was argue the other into agreement! Can you relate to that? We were like boxers in a boxing match. We never physically hit each other, but we were both determined to win every bout!

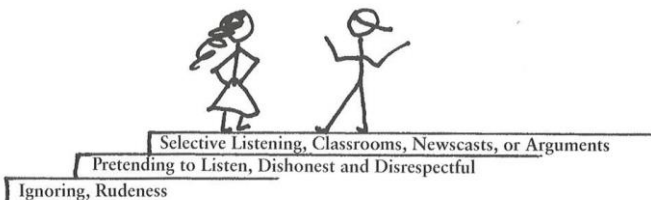
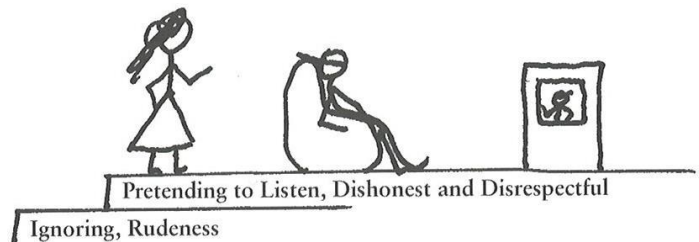
When Jim was talking, I didn't want to understand his point of view. I just wanted him to agree with mine! So I wasn't listening, I was planning my rebuttal or deciding if I agreed with him...or not.

Here are the five levels of listening. As you review them, try to evaluate which level of listening you are actually on in any given conversation.



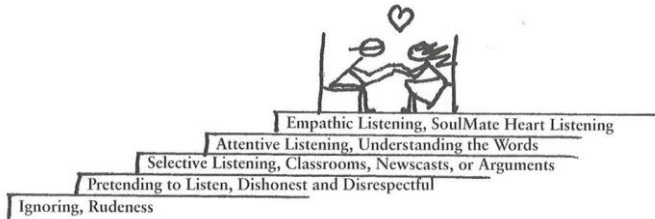
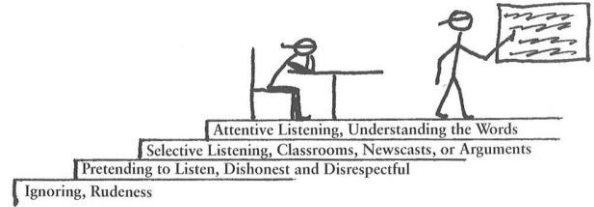
This level of NOT listening is familiar to all of us. It feels so dismissive and disrespectful to be ignored. Do you ever do this hoping it won't be noticed? Or, even, perhaps, to deliberately reject someone?

Pretending to listen is not much better than ignoring someone. I've found myself doing this when trying to multi-task. It's far better to stop what I'm doing, give my full attention to the speaker, listen, and then go back to task.



Selective listening is often what is done in a fight or disagreement. You hear something that triggers a reaction, respond to that, but neglect to hear or respond to whatever else was said...often missing something that was more positive.

Attentive Listening is how we listen in a classroom, or when we need to understand instructions or a list of requests. It's essential for learning content or conducting business, but not emotionally involved enough for a caring relationship conversation.



Empathic Listening is when I'm not just listening to the words, but to the emotions and meaning behind the words. This is the skill that enabled Jim and me to transform our relationship. It required focus and discipline in order to truly listen for the purpose of understanding the other's point of view. Along with speaking

respectfully, and great anger management skills, we were finally able to treat each other with respect 24/7. And isn't listening while trying to understand the other so respectful?

One of the characteristics of deep, empathic, reflective or listening to understand (all the names by which this level of listening is known) is repeating back what the other has said to make sure you understand accurately it's meaning. It may feel awkward to do this in the beginning. It doesn't need to be word for word sounding like a parrot. Rather summarize in your own words what you believe was the meaning of the message. If you got the meaning wrong, let the speaker restate it until you get it right.

Then trade places. You become the speaker, the other becomes the person Listening to Understand.

THREE POWERFUL RESULTS:

1. You are sure you are understanding the accurate meaning of what the other is saying.
2. The speaker feels heard and understood.
3. An emotional bond is created between you *whether or not you agree with what was said.*

That emotional connection makes it easier to find a solution to whatever issue is up between you because you have taken turns being heard and understood by the other.

Listening is a largely untapped powerful skill that can transform your relationships. Although a bit awkward in the beginning, wouldn't you love to be known as that person who provides safety by simply listening with openness and caring?

Name those in your family or circle with whom you will try Listening to Understand:

Best wishes,

Nancy Landrum