

Listen and Check Understanding

Couples communication and boundaries | Couples | 15 to 20 minutes

Practice reflecting a partner accurately before responding.

Choose a topic with manageable intensity. The speaker gets two minutes to describe one experience. The listener first checks what they understood. Understanding another person does not require agreeing with every interpretation or giving up your own perspective.

Speaker round

Describe what happened, how it affected you, and what matters now. Keep to one event. You may read from notes, slow down, or stop. Avoid insults and claims about the other person's motives.

Listener round

Try: "What I hear is... The part that mattered most was... Did I understand?" Let the speaker correct one point. Then ask whether they want listening, ideas, or a practical response. Do not turn the reflection into a rebuttal.

Switch by agreement

When the speaker feels sufficiently understood, agree whether to switch or pause. This is a short practice, not a requirement to resolve the issue. Stop if either person feels intimidated or unsafe.

Speaker notes on the event and its impact

Listener reflection in my own words

One correction or detail I missed

The response requested and our next step