

# A HURTING HEART HAS NO EARS

## *Learn How to Listen*

1. Be more aware of the other person than you are of yourself.
2. Don't think about what you are going to say next until the other person has finished talking.
3. Focus on the feelings that lie buried beneath the words.

## **Empathise with Hurt Feelings**

Empathy is feeling with someone, not ignoring or riding roughshod over their feelings, or making light of them. Someone has described it as "your pain in my heart": When someone senses we have time to identify and understand how they are feeling, they feel cared for and supported. You may know a person's thoughts, judgements and ideas, but you will not know a person until you know how he or she really feels.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are yet was without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

Tuning into a person's thoughts and ideas will give you insight into a person but understanding their true feelings will show you what's in their heart.

Reflect back to people what they are feeling. Be sensitive

## **The Awesome Power of Words**

Be aware of the awesome power of words to encourage or discourage, even when expressed with the best intentions.

"The tongue has the power of life and death." Proverbs 18:21

"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who have been made in God's likeness." James 3:9

## *Some people are exhorters when they need to be encouragers*

- When confronted by other peoples hurt we might find it an uncomfortable experience and feel we don't know what to say.
    - In this situation try to avoid religious clichés such as:  
"You need to have more faith" or "Praise the Lord anyway."
  - The effect in the hurting individuals can be very negative. To be an effective, we need to use the right words. And therefore give the right message.
- The key message we need to communicate is:
- "I'm a good listener and I care"**
- The careful and effective choice of words is encouraged by Scripture:  
"Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up." (Proverbs 12:25)  
"A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit."  
(Proverbs 15:4)
- Words that encourage are:
- Prompted by love "To make an apt answer is a joy to anyone, and a word in season, how good it is!" (Proverbs 15:23).
  - Chosen with care "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver."  
(Proverbs 25:11).

- Spoken with tenderness “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29).

Using appropriate words encourages a person to open up.

## Learn How to Use Words as Door Openers

A door opener encourages the other person to open up and usually takes the form of a question that enables a person to share their thoughts.

A door closer is usually a statement that causes a person to close up and mostly invites only a one word response.

Good door openers encourage further sharing of the person’s feelings. But never force a person to share more than they wish. Simply offer yourself – no more.

CAN YOU THINK OF EXAMPLES?

## Understanding the Importance of Body Language

More and more studies show that it is not just what we say that is important, but also the way we say it. Your body language also speaks volumes and can confirm or contradict what you are saying. Let your body communicate your sincerity and interest.

**Things to consider in this area are:**

- Focus fully in the person
- Respect psychological space
- Maintain appropriate posture
- Use proper and appropriate eye contact
- Match facial expressions

**Don’t feel that in a conversation your role is to solve the problem – in particular don’t be drawn in out of your depth.**

- Remember it’s God’s job to do the changing
- Be prepared to sit in the pain and **not** have the answers
- Listen with your heart
- Help a person clarify an issue by reflective and empathic listening
- The person should feel you care and understand
- Give support not platitudes
- Caring is a process

This position gives us permission to “be with” people in their pain and simply notice without the restless need to change or confront. We can reflect and contemplate, discerning when and how to ask for and receive help. We are able to embrace our fragility and rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit in our relationships, relying on His enabling grace and His power being made perfect in our weaknesses. As Christians, we allow ourselves the space to live into the full experience of our helplessness, despair, and hopelessness. We remain sensitive to tragic suffering. We are receptive to pain, discomfort, and suffering. We “**sat where they sat in their mourning, overwhelmed**” (Ezekiel 3:15), yet without anxiously striving to change anything. This posture allows us not only to be a witness to the suffering of others, but to be Christ to them in that moment. Out of this experience, we deepen compassion, mercy, humility, and gentleness. The Lamb of God and the wounded healer represent the positive attributes of our personal ministry.<sup>1</sup>

**PRAY MUCH... A HURTING HEART HAS NO EARS....**

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<sup>1</sup> [Last paragraph only] Cathy Hastie M.Div. Assistant Director Pastoral Care and Education Carolinas Medical Centre Charlotte N.C. 28232-2861 Using the Modification of the Classic Drama Triangle to Enhance Pastoral Care [Modified]