



Listening with Love

What is Listening with Love

Listening with Love is one of a number of ways to open a safe space for anyone who wants to share something that really matters to them.

When listening with love, we do not intrude into that space. We do not react, speak, judge or comment in any way and we certainly do not give advice.

Listening with Love: preparation

- First rule: what is said in this room, stays in this room. Strict confidentiality!
- Now agree upon who takes part in the sharing and listening.
- Participants all take turns sharing and listening. Those who do not want to share automatically become observers.
- Observers do not speak at all, they observe and envelop the participants in their loving attention.
- Agree upon the time allotted for each sharing. Take into account that a full turn also includes response and silence for sending and receiving love. That takes at least five more minutes.
- The time for sharing is a safe space given to the speaker. So even if the speaker stops after a few minutes we still silently give him/her our loving attention for the full period agreed upon.

Listening with Love: steps

- Start with quiet. The best preparation for a Listening with Love session is like preparation for Latihan. Empty yourself of thoughts and quietly wait for what comes to you.
- For every participant take the following steps each turn:
 - Sharing: the speaker has the floor to share whatever they want. Both listeners (who will take their turn sharing) and observers remain silent and do not react.
 - Response: after the allotted time has finished the listeners may respond, if something has touched their heart. Responding is not obligatory. There is no dialogue or discussion.
 - Silence: to allow the speaker to receive the love the listeners and observers are consciously sending their way.
- End with quiet.

Listening with Love: rules for the listener 1

1. When listening we are totally silent and do not react in any way.
2. We do not listen with our mind. Rather, we ignore our thoughts and observe the speaker.
3. While observing intently, we open our hearts for the unexpected.
4. When the speaker falls silent, we keep giving our full attention to the speaker without speaking or reacting until the time given for sharing has passed.
5. When the sharing time has finished we may respond, but only when our heart is touched by the one we observed. There is no obligation to respond.

Listening with Love: rules for the listener 2

6. What touches our heart is an impression that moves us, therefore it is emotional. Start your response with the words; 'What touched my heart is ...'
7. Feedback of this impression can best be given in a few words, one or two sentences at most. Using a lot of words distracts from the core of what we want to say and invites thinking.
8. When you leave this room, forget everything you have heard in the sharing!

Listening with Love: tips for facilitators 1

- The number of participants in a Listening with Love circle is dependent on a) time and b) the space available.
 - a) giving your full attention to others takes energy and doing it for more than an hour and a half is not advisable. The time per person for sharing depends on the number of participants and the time limit of an hour and a half.
 - b) participants are seated in a circle and if there is enough space, observers can sit outside of this circle. If the group is larger than fifteen, it's better to split up.

Listening with Love: tips for facilitators 2

- With experienced listeners you can also work in groups of three to five without observers. Then they can take turns keeping time and no facilitators are needed.
- If many in the group do this for the first time, start the response step by giving your own response. Of course doing it 'by the book', beginning with "What touched my heart was...".
- If listeners start giving advice or sharing their own experiences when responding, do not be afraid to intervene! Red flags are: "I recognised...", "I think..." and any response longer than one or two sentences. Then again, some people simply need more words to get to the point, so trust your own heart ;)