

## **Rules of the Road for the Talk/Listen Exercise**

- 1) One person talks about whatever he/she wants to for fifteen minutes. Every minute or two the listener reflects back as accurately as possible what the talker is saying without judgement, rebuttal, or any other editorial comment, even positive ones. The listener contains their reactivity as best they can. The talker can correct the listener if she/he feels that the listener is missing the main points.
- 2) There should be two 15 minute sessions scheduled per week with a minimum of 24 hours between them. There should be no comment on what the talker discussed except in the talk/listen format.
- 3) Time-out rule. If in a talk/listen conversation or any other heated conflictual situation, one member of the couple feels that the communication is too destructive to continue then they call for an automatic Time Out which stops the conversation immediately. The person calling for the Time Out assumes responsibility for re-engaging the conversation within a minimum of 24 hours.

Please remember that this clunky communication exercise is simply designed to allow each member of a couple to discuss difficult and vulnerable feelings in a safe manner. It is neither a decision making or problem solving technique. Don't judge the value of the exercise on whether it makes you feel closer in the moment. Frequently, it won't