



## Listen and Talk

Listening quite literally calms the brain. If we connect through listening to another human being their brain releases endorphins that calm and increase the capacity of the brain to function. This is why listening and asking open questions has become so important in so many area of working with people, not least of all conflict resolution.

There is a saying that we should listen until we know what it is like to walk a mile in the other person's moccasins.

The term for this kind of listening is Active Listening. As the term suggests, listening like this require a lot of energy and our full concentration.

It can take quite a lot of practise to stop yourself making suggestions or telling a story of how something similar happened to you but, if you can do it, it can be like magic.

The effect of really listening to someone else can make such a difference.

Children need to talk about their loss in order to make sense of what has happened to them. It is not unusual for a child to go through things twenty or thirty times. This repetition is not a sign of not understanding. It is a child's way of learning to understand. Each time you sit and listen you are helping your child make sense of how they feel and what this loss means for them. Slowly they will integrate and accept their new reality.

To help this conversation ask short, easy questions. Try and ask questions that encourage the child to talk more For example: " It sounds as if this has made you very sad. Can you tell me more?" or " I can hear how hard this has been. What was it like for you?"

Your child may only talk for a few minutes and then change the subject. That is fine. Those few minutes will have helped.

"Listen to the Thunder until the rain starts." Listening and supporting someone as they go through the high emotions of grief can be like sitting still in the middle of a thunder storm listening to the chaos it brings. Stay calm and strong. Focus on just being there and eventually the rain (tears) will come. After the rain the rainbow will appear bringing hope.

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