

THE SKILL OF "PARAPHRASING" COMMUNICATION

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PARTNER 1

Step 1

"I" - MESSAGE

Partner 1 reveals him/her self, expresses briefly one's own thoughts and feelings, trying to be clear, direct, open, and revealing of the personal message being offered. The focus is on partner 1 alone --> **"I think... feel..."** This is an assertive revelation or sharing, an opening of one's heart.

Step 3

APPRAISAL

Partner 1 makes an "appraisal" of their effort for empathetic understanding: "Am I feeling completely understood?" If he/she feels a full empathetic understanding, then the appraisal is "YES". If not, "NO."

YES = continue by moving to the next step.

NO = return to step 1, the original "I" message, and try again.

PARTNER 2

Step 2

PARAPHRASE

Partner 2 listens undividedly, then summarizes the personal sharing he/she understands Partner 1 to be expressing. **"What I think I hear you saying is..."** The focus is solely upon Partner 1. This is empathetic listening -- offering one's own words of one's understanding of Partner 1's thoughts and feelings.

Two kinds of "Paraphrasing":

1. TWO-WAY " or "leap-frog" paraphrasing -- switch partner on "yes" appraisals.
2. ONE-WAY or single-focus paraphrasing -- even with a "yes" appraisal, the same partner continues (doesn't switch). This use provides the partner with the "floor" to continue on the same focus until satisfaction. It is especially useful when the feelings are very important.