

The Great Listener Card

Use it when... *any conversation that matters — in your triad, at the table, on the phone.*

1 • YOUR POSTURE — BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Curious, not clever. **Present**, not preparing your reply.
Slow, not solving. Aim for understanding, not agreement.
Your job is not to fix, judge or impress — only to understand.

2 • OPEN THE DOOR

- “What’s on your mind?”
- “What’s been most important to you lately?”
- “What chapter of life does this feel like?”
- “What’s been hardest — or most meaningful — about this?”

3 • SHOW HIM YOU HEARD HIM — THE CORE SKILL

Mirror	Repeat his last few words, with curiosity. “Not feeling needed?”
Label	Name the emotion, gently. “It sounds like you’re carrying a lot.”
Summarize	Meaning plus emotion, in one sentence. “So you’re trying to do the right thing, and you feel stretched.”

The goal is to hear him say **“That’s right.”** Not “you’re right” — that ends the conversation. “That’s right” opens it.

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4 • LISTENING OR FIXING?

Two different superpowers. Only one of them works in a triad, and only one works at home.

LISTENING	FIXING
Seeks understanding	Seeks solutions
Slows the moment	Rushes the moment
Builds safety	Can trigger defensiveness
Honors the person	Focuses on the problem
Is often enough	Often comes too soon

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

LISTENING	FIXING
“Tell me more.”	“Here’s what you should do.”
“That sounds hard.”	“That’s not a big deal.”
“I hear you.”	“You’re looking at this wrong.”
“I’m on your side.”	“Let me explain.”

5 • BEFORE YOU OFFER ANYTHING

Help, or just heard? Ask: “Do you want help with this, or do you want to be heard?” If he says heard, that is the work.

Slipped into fixing? “Sorry, I shifted into fixing. Let me try that again.” Repair builds more trust than perfection.

THIS SKILL’S PRACTICES S3 Let them finish • S6 Reflect it back

More in the Toolkit: 1 • Listen
Adapted from Chris Voss (Never Split the Difference), David Brooks and Michael Bungay Stanier.
WhyzMen • Rewire Retirement • Card E1 • r4

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