

# HEART TALK Quick Start

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Heart talk is a communication method used to increase the opportunity to be known by your spouse. We are created to be known at a heart and feeling level with one another.

**INVITE** One spouse can extend an invitation to a Heart Talk. It is helpful if you can give a specific topic (our conversation this morning OR how I have been feeling around finances.) Ask “When would you be ready?”

**RSVP** The recipient of the invitation should ask themselves, “Am I ready to have a heart talk right now? Have I done a Care Cycle on this topic?” If not, “When can I be prepared to have a heart talk on this topic?” RSVP with specific time.

**PREPARE** Each spouse should prepare their hearts using a Care Cycle. Identify 2-3 feeling words you would like to share.

**PRAY** Each spouse can begin by praying for themselves, asking God to open their ears and eyes to hear and see their spouse accurately today. Ask God to give honest, safe and respectful words to communicate. If you’re not ready to pray together, most likely you are not in an open posture to share and receive your hearts.

## **SPEAKER:**

**HOLD A PROP** The speaker can hold a flashlight toward their heart reminding the speaker and listener whose heart the focus is on.

**SET THE SCENE** The speaker can identify the setting using “I” or “we” language. Omit these three words that will put the listener on the defense: ~~YOU, NEVER, ALWAYS.~~

**SHARE FEELINGS** From your Care Cycle, share 2-3 feeling words you would like your listener to hear, understand and care about. Remember, *small, soft, slow* bites.

## **LISTENER:**

**REPEAT/REFLECT** Reflect back to your spouse the feelings you heard them share. You can look at the Feeling List and use synonyms to check with your spouse if you are understanding their heart. As you listen, imagine what it would feel like if you felt those same feeling words. Let yourself begin to feel compassion for your spouse and their heart's pain. You do not have to agree that you would feel the same in this situation. Your job is not to correct their feelings or switch the spotlight back to yourself and your feelings. You can add a statement to let your spouse know you care about their feelings. Try statements like: "thank you for sharing your feelings with me, "that makes sense" or "you and your feelings are important to me." This is not the time to ask, "why?" This question puts our speaker in a defensive position.

**RETURN TO SPEAKER** Let your listener know the following:

- I do or do not feel heard (If you're not feeling heard try repeating the same 2-3 feeling words.)
- I do or do not feel understood (If you're not feeling understood, try looking again at the feeling list and see if there is a more accurate feeling word.)
- I do or do not feel cared for (If your not feeling cared for, you can let your spouse know this and see if they want to add something to indicate their care. Ultimately, God is the healer and the One who can care in the way we need the most.)

**DECIDE WHEN TO SWITCH ROLES** For some heart talks you may be ready to switch speaker/listener roles at this time. For others, you may want to take time in between allowing the feelings to marinate in the listeners heart and giving them time to do a Care Cycle for their feelings that may have come up in the heart talk. If this is the case, decide when you are going to come back. It can be later that day or even the following day.

## **HELPFUL TIPS**

Remember feelings are valuable and worthy of attending to and sharing with one another. It is a way you can be known and more connected with one another. Feelings are neither right nor wrong.

The goal of Heart Talk is NOT to make your feelings more important than your spouses or get your spouse to change, admit guilt or apologize. Nothing will be “fixed” or “resolved” at the end of a heart talk. The goal again is to have an opportunity to feel Heard, Understood, and Cared for.