

Empathetic Listening Session Framework

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Source Materials:

[Final Word Protocol](#), Kathy Simon, Mandel Teacher Educator Institute

[Troika Protocol](#), Liberating Structures

Intro:

1. Spread out human feelings cards on one table and values cards on another. Invite women to take one card from each table that feels alive for them right now. Each woman introduced herself just with name and reading the two cards.
2. Introduce session, explain that being able to reflect a feeling or a need can be a helpful way of reflecting back. That we're not doing any comparing, responding, or problem solving, just listening and reflecting today.
3. Read and discuss texts on listening with full group. (texts below)
4. Explain the protocol for listening and reflecting. Ask if any questions. Model process if necessary.
5. Use chime for timer.

Texts on Listening:

Pirkei Avot 6:6

גְּדוּלָּה תוֹרָה יוֹתֵר מִן הַכֹּהֵנָה וּמִן הַמַּלְכוּת, שֶׁהַמַּלְכוּת נִקְנִית בִּשְׁלֹשִׁים מַעֲלוֹת, וְהַכֹּהֵנָה בֶּעֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע, וְהַתּוֹרָה נִקְנִית בְּאַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה דְּבָרִים. וְאֵלּוּ הֵן, בְּתַלְמוּד, בְּשִׁמְיעַת הָאָז, בְּעִרְכַּת שְׁפָתַיִם, בְּבִינַת הַלֵּב, בְּשִׁכּוּלֵי הַלֵּב, בְּאַיְמָה בִּירְאָה, בְּעִנּוּה, בְּשִׁמְחָה

Greater is learning Torah than the priesthood and than royalty, for royalty is acquired by thirty stages, and the priesthood by twenty-four, but the Torah by forty-eight things. By study, attentive listening, proper speech, by an understanding heart, by an intelligent heart, by awe, by fear, by humility, by joy...

Rabbi Shai Held, *Judaism is About Love*

"Sacred Indignation"

The world is a gift, but it sometimes seems like an inferno; life is a gift, but it can sometimes be unbearably painful. Authentic spiritual life requires us to live with our eyes

open and to refuse to lie about what we see, either to God or to ourselves. So although gratitude is fundamental to the spiritual life, it cannot be the whole story. Side by side with gratitude lives protest, a deep and unabashed conviction that the world as it is a very far cry from the world as it should be, and a demand that the gap between them begin to be closed.

From the prayer Avinu Malkenu

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ

Avinu Malkenu hear our voices, spare us and have compassion on us.

Empathetic Listening Process:

- In groups of 3, sit facing each other.
- Choose order of speakers (person 1, 2, and 3) to answer the question:

“What is weighing on your heart as a Jewish person right now?”

- 4 minutes: person 1 shares while person 2 and 3 listen silently and actively.
- 2 minutes: person 2 and 3 ask clarifying questions and person 1 responds.
- 1 minute: person 2 reflects back the feeling and content of what person 1 said. (This is NOT person 2’s opinions, feelings, response, or problem-solving. This is reflection only of what person 1 shared.)
- 1 minute: person 3 reflects back the feeling and content of what person 1 said. (This is NOT person 3’s opinions, feelings, response, or problem-solving. This is reflection only of what person 1 shared.)
- Take a breath, sit in silence for a minute or two.
- Repeat 8 minute process with person 2 sharing and then person 3 sharing.

Reflection after full sharing session, first in small groups, then as larger group:

How did it feel to share and to listen?