

HLP EXERCISE

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“When we are in relationship, we are called on to give body, thoughts, and emotions to our partner and to accept body, thoughts, and emotions from them. Learning how to do this is a **prerequisite** (added emphasis) for intimacy and the spirituality to which it gives birth.”¹

How do we GIVE when we fear how our spouse will respond? How do we ACCEPT from them when such “talks” create anxiety or fear? To practice empathy we must be willing to listen without judgment and “hold” what they say while keeping our own emotions in check without defense. Empathy is an art form. It will take time and practice to get comfortable with this.

The purpose of this exercise is to begin the process of creating a safe environment for sharing your feelings. This experience is a **daily** tool and should only take 5 to 10 minutes. There are a few simple rules for HLP. Each of you will take a turn going through the HLP process without interruption. Also, employ the following rules:

1. Do not give advice or try to fix your spouse. This is a time to just listen.
2. Advice can only be given if asked for by your spouse.
3. You can ask clarifying questions or make empathetic comments like, “I am sorry you are going through this.” Hold your judgments.
4. Refer to the feeling/emotion wheel to help identify your emotions.

NOW FOR THE EXERCISE

Each of you will take a turn and share the following three elements:

H Share an emotional **HIGH** moment that you experienced in the last 24 hours. Describe the event and the accompanying feeling(s). This could be a moment of joy or gratitude.

L Share an emotional **LOW** moment that you experienced in the last 24 hours. Describe the event and the accompanying feeling(s). This could be a time you felt sad or upset.

P Share any **PREOCCUPATION** you have had in the last 24 hours. What have you been worried about over the last week? Describe what has been occupying your mind and the accompanying feeling(s).

¹ Mellody, P. (2004). *The Intimacy Factor: The Ground Rules for Overcoming the Obstacles to Truth, Respect, and Lasting Love*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. xii.