

## LISTENING

THE SINGLE MOST ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR LITERACY ACCELERATION IS THE CAPACITY TO GENUINELY LISTEN—WITH YOUR EYES AND WITH YOUR HEART—TO YOURSELF AND TO YOUR LEARNING PARTNERS. YOU WILL BECOME REAL LEARNING PARTNERS ONCE YOU ARE OPEN TO LEARNING AS MUCH FROM THEM AS THEY DO FROM YOU.

GENUINE LISTENING CREATES SAFE SPACE AND TAKES AWAY THE ANXIETY THAT INHIBITS LEARNING. WHEN YOU FEEL SAFE, YOU ARE OPEN TO NEW THOUGHTS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES. DIFFICULTIES BECOME, NOT A THREAT TO AVOID AND DENY, BUT A CHALLENGE TO FACE—OR TO CONSCIOUSLY DECIDE NOT TO FACE JUST YET. WHEN YOU FEEL SAFE YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE OR PRETEND. IN FACT, PAST PERFORMANCE MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE. A NEW WORLD OF LEARNING OPENS UP.

GENUINE LISTENING ALSO ALLOWS YOU TO DISCOVER YOUR GREATEST RESOURCE: YOUR PARTNERS' LIFE EXPERIENCES AND REAL INTERESTS AND YOUR OWN. WHEN YOUR LEARNING PARTNERS ARE ALLOWED TO FOLLOW THEIR DEEPEST INTERESTS, THEY CAN FOCUS MORE EASILY AND LEARNING BECOMES ORGANIC. IF YOU LET THEIR ENTHUSIASM AND THE LIGHT IN THEIR EYES GUIDE YOU, MOTIVATION WILL BECOME SELF-DIRECTED AND SELF-REINFORCING. JUST LISTEN FOR CLUES ABOUT THEIR NEW OR HIDDEN INTERESTS TO POINT YOU TO LIBRARY BOOKS, MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, AND OTHER MATERIALS CONTAINING WORDS AND PHRASES THAT THEY DON'T KNOW THEY KNOW.

HAVE THE COURAGE TO IMMEDIATELY DROP ANYTHING THAT IS OF NO INTEREST OR SMACKS OF BUSYWORK. THE MOTIVATION TO LEARN WILL THEN ACCELERATE.

PARADOXICALLY, HOW WELL YOU LISTEN TO YOUR DEEPEST SELF WILL BE THE MEASURE OF HOW WELL YOU HEAR WHAT YOUR LEARNING PARTNERS SHARE WITH YOU. ALLOW YOURSELF TO TRUST YOUR OWN INSTINCTS, INSIGHTS, AND INTERESTS.

AS YOU BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS OF THE LEARNINGS FROM YOUR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE, THE TIME YOU SPEND TOGETHER WILL BE GREATLY ENRICHED. YOU WILL DISCOVER THE SYNERGY OF TWO PEOPLE ENGAGED IN A COMMON TASK. YOU WILL EXPERIENCE A LEVEL OF HEARTFELT RESPONSIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVE CREATIVITY THAT MAY BE NEW TO BOTH OF YOU.