

“In a Listening Partnership, the listener helps unleash their partner’s full intelligence. That is all.”

– Patty Wipfler, *Hand in Hand Parenting* founder

# Listening Partnerships

## Hand in Hand Parenting & PQ for Parents

In a listening partnership, two parents exchange equal amounts of time to listen to each other. The listener respects the partner’s own intelligence [in PQ language, our Sage] to find the way once unburdened by rigid, fear-based reactions to hurt [Saboteurs]. By giving our full, warm, non-judgmental attention while listening, the listener holds a safe space for their partner to offload, metabolize, and release the stressful emotions that are blocking their fully loving, caring, intelligent self.

**Respect your listening partner and the power of your own attention.**

*Your Partner is Intelligent; Your Attention is Powerful*

Instead of offering solutions or advice, we simply listen with respect and with our whole body and whole heart. As Hand in Hand parent coach Marilupe says, the gift is in the space we hold for another person to be seen and to be safe to say what they need to say.



I have been given the Gift of being listened to.  
And so I learned to listen, too.

I have learned to quiet my mind and to not interrupt.  
I have learned to see the goodness in others and to not judge.

Listening in this way can be healing. For both. You see? For in these precious encounters, two humans see each other, and I wonder, Who gives the Gift to whom?

– Marilupe de la Calle

*Hand in Hand Parenting* coach

## #1 Set up

We'll need a timer for taking equal turns and a private space whether in person or on phone/video call.

## #2 Confidentiality bubble

After the timer goes off, we don't talk about *and don't even refer back to* anything that has been shared by our listening partner—not even to our listening partner. As Marilupe says, "Once that bubble is closed, it stays closed. So next week I'm not going to ask you, 'How's your uncle doing from last week?' Or, if what you said brings up similar feelings in me, I won't say, 'Like you, I also struggle...'. Let's not poke into other people's bubbles."

## #3 Glow

We can have a little mantra in our mind that says, "You're smart. You're good. I believe in you." It's not our role to fix, comment upon, or judge. It's not our role either to become enmeshed and swallow another's hurt. Patty Wipfler, founder of Hand in Hand, invites us to glow. We can glow a little to the human being in front of us. With those non-verbal signals, we are saying, "I'm right here. I see you. I hear you."

## #4 Bright Spot and Simple Refresher

It can be helpful to start by sharing a little bright spot—something a little sweet that happened in the last week. It can also be helpful when transitioning after the timer has gone off to ask a light, simple refresher question that engages our prefrontal cortex just enough. For example, if your partner wants a refresher question, you can ask a silly, simple question like these: "What animals have four legs but can walk on two?" or "Where's a good place to jump in puddles where you live?"

## #5 Support crying, laughing, and other expressions of emotional release

We can have so many judgments about emotional expression, but crying and laughing, for example, are natural mechanisms of healing. When someone really listens without judging us, we can feel safe enough to release the stuck, stressful emotions that are interfering in our fuller intelligence and love.

## #6 Let it just be a Listening Partnership

As much as possible, it works well for a listening partnership to *simply be a listening partnership*. There's no need to add a social dimension to the relationship with chitchat before or after, for example. Every listening partnership can be unique, too, and each of us gets to say what works and what doesn't work for us.

We can try a listening partner for a few weeks and then decide whether or not this is something we both want to continue, since everyone has their personal styles and preferences for what most helps them feel safe. Once well-established, a listening partnership can be a lifeline for years to come.

## Learning more...

If you want to learn more about Hand in Hand Listening Partnerships, visit [www.handinhandparenting.org](http://www.handinhandparenting.org) for a self-guided online course or contact Marilupe de la Calle at [marilupe@handinhandparenting.org](mailto:marilupe@handinhandparenting.org) about her upcoming workshops. For more on how PQ for Parents supports listening partnerships, contact Amy Koski, our PQ for Parents listening partnership coordinator, at [amy@sorterasolutions.com](mailto:amy@sorterasolutions.com).