

Inquirer

The Effective Listener

Listen Calmly

Don't defend yourself, argue or cross-complain.
Remind yourself that you don't have to take what's said so personally.

Ask Questions

Develop an interested and curious state of mind. The questions you ask are designed to understand your partner's experience.
Can you come up with any examples on your own that will let your partner know you really understand?

Reminder to self:

*Am I in a place to listen with openness?
I do not own this problem.
I do not need to get upset.
It's up to me to manage my reactions.*

Empathize

Do your best to put yourself in your partner's shoes...
Imagine what it's really like for them.
Your only goal is to understand.
There's no need to agree, to change, or give up what you think or feel.

Recap

Repeat back to your partner, as accurately and completely as you are able, what you've understood.
Check it out with your partner to see if it's complete and accurate.

Reminder to self:

*My partner is a separate person with their own feelings, thoughts, personality and family history.
I only need to listen, not look for solutions.*