

Learning the Art of Listening - A Relationship Workshop with Betty Blanc

Myrna Lapres
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On June 21, participants had the privilege of learning from **Betty Blanc**, a licensed marriage and family therapist, in a deeply engaging webinar titled *"How to Be a Good Listener in Any Relationship."*

Ms. Blanc, who currently works primarily with couples, brought a wealth of experience from her diverse background, having worked in schools, residential treatment centers, and adult care facilities. Drawing on her training in the renowned Gottman Method for couples therapy, she emphasized that **all relationships - whether romantic, familial, or professional - benefit from clear guidelines.**

She introduced four powerful *Rules of Engagement* that serve as foundational tools for deep and effective listening:

Negative emotions are important and must be acknowledged
No one is right
Acceptance is crucial
Focus on fondness and admiration

These principles served as a helpful framework for understanding how to create emotional safety and empathy in any relationship.

Ms. Blanc also explained that relationship challenges generally fall into two categories:

- **Solvable problems**, which can be resolved through change or compromise
- **Perpetual problems**, which often lead to repeated arguments and reflect deeper personality or value differences

To bring these concepts to life, Ms. Blanc presented three relatable scenarios and asked participants to vote on whether each one represented a solvable or perpetual problem. This interactive approach sparked meaningful discussion and kept everyone engaged.

The program also included breakout room sessions, where participants had the opportunity to practice reflective listening using clear speaker and listener guidelines. These moments of connection proved to be deeply impactful. One pair, who had both lost their spouses in recent years, shared how meaningful it was to speak openly and feel truly heard - something they hadn't experienced in a long time.

By the end of the session, many participants expressed appreciation for the tools they had gained and the heartfelt conversations they had shared. The evening was a powerful reminder that **listening with intention is one of the most important gifts we can offer to those we care about.**