

LISTEN

When you listen you affirm me,
but your listening must be real:
sensitive and serious,
not looking busily around, not with a worried or distracted frown,
not preparing what you will say next,
but giving me your full attention.
You are telling me that I am a person of value,
important and worth listening to,
one with whom you will share yourself

I have ideas to share,
feelings, which too often I keep to myself;
deep questions which struggle inside me for answers.
I have hopes only tentatively acknowledged
which are not easy to share,
and pain and guilt and fear I try to stifle.
These are sensitive areas and a real part of me,
but it takes courage to confide in another.
I need to listen too if we are to come close.
How can I tell you I understand?
I can show interest with my eyes or an occasional word,
attuned to pick up not only the spoken words,
but also the glimmer of a smile,
a look of pain, the hesitation, the struggle
which may suggest something as yet too deep for words.

So let us take time together,
respecting the other's freedom,
encouraging without hurrying,
understanding that some things may never be brought to light,
but others may emerge if given time.
Each through this listening, enriches the other
with the priceless gift of intimacy.

-Keith Pearson, Melbourne, Australia