From The Art of Listening in a Healing Way, by James E. Miller

“It’s hard to overestimate the importance of one aspect of being a healing listener: you release your own will so you can follow the lead of the other’s will as it relates to the communication between you.

You let go of any attempt to control the one who’s talking and to shape whatever they’re saying. The agenda is theirs, not yours. It is their direction to be followed, their wisdom to be honored, their life to be witnessed, their thoughts and directions to be given form….

Healing listening asks you to stay out of the way so that what is most healing for another has the best possible chance of appearing and then growing.” p. 47

“You dare not hurry healing listening itself. Should you attempt to do so, it will become less healing. The one who’s speaking will then not open up naturally and comfortably. They may not touch upon all that is important, and something critical will remain missing. Human growth often requires periods in which change is allowed to unfold as it will, which means that temporarily it may not unfold at all. This all takes time, which takes patience.” p. 63

Restorative Questions

1. From your perspective, what happened?
2. What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
3. How do you feel when you look back at the event now?
4. Who has been affected by what happened and how?
5. What has been the hardest thing for you?
6. What do you think needs to happen now to make things right?

**Role Play**

1. Recall an emotionally-charged experience that you had with someone else who is not in this room, and which still feels unresolved to you. Sit with that experience for a moment and recall the different emotions it brings up for you.

2. Divide into pairs, and, using the restorative questions, ask your partner to describe the experience and its impacts. After the situation has been described, listener, check your understanding of the situation and its impact on the speaker. Speaker, correct and clarify if needed. When complete, switch roles, with a new listener asking the restorative questions and a new speaker describing his or her experience.

*Pause before moving on to the next phase of the exercise, and await further instructions.*

3. Shift from pairs to groups of three or four. Assign roles:

a. One person to describe the incident (victim)

b. One person to take the role of the other person involved in the incident (wrongdoer). If more than one person is involved, choose just one for this activity.

c. One person to facilitate (by asking restorative questions).

d. One person to serve as a community member.

4. As a group, establish the story. Make sure that the incident and its meaning is understood before moving on.

5. Facilitator, ask questions in order given. Listen to responses. Ask for clarity if you need it.

**Mini Conference Facilitator’s Script**

**To the Victim:**

From your perspective, what happened?

What were you thinking and feeling as the situation was happening?

How have you been affected? How have others been affected?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

**To the Wrongdoer:**

What have you heard from (victim name)?

**To the Victim:**

Did s/he hear you?

**To the Wrongdoer:**

From your perspective, what happened?

What were you thinking and feeling when you chose to act?

Who do you think has been impacted by what you did? In what ways?

How do you feel about your actions when you look back at the event now?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

**To the Victim:**

What have you heard from (wrongdoer name)?

**To the Wrongdoer:**

Did s/he hear you?

**To each person:**

What do you believe needs to happen now to make things right?

**To each person (beginning with the victim):**

How are you feeling about the situation now, and for what reasons?