YOU'RE TALKING. BUT ARE YOU REACHING EACH OTHER?

Start with one conversation

Use this companion as you listen. Choose one interaction you want to understand, then follow the prompts at your own pace. You do not have to solve your entire relationship today.

Keep safety first

Communication practice never makes you responsible for another person's abuse. You do not have to sound perfectly calm to deserve safety. If there is intimidation or danger, prioritize confidential support and safety over practicing a difficult conversation.

Notice what happens before the words land

Tone, pace, volume, facial expression, and timing can affect how a message is received. Respect can be firm. Ask whether you are addressing a problem or degrading a person.

The conversation I am bringing to this episode:

What was said or done that I could actually observe?
Separate the event from your interpretation of the other person's intentions.

What did I feel, and what remained unresolved?

"You can take responsibility for your delivery without taking responsibility for their choices."

TVT / TIMING · VERBIAGE · TONE

Prepare a clearer exchange

Timing begins with capacity

Do we both have enough space to speak and listen? Consider privacy, fatigue, distractions, and whether either person is overwhelmed. Perfect timing is not required, but a pause needs a way back.

A workable time, or a specific time to return:

Choose words that name the issue

Write your raw thought privately. Then describe what you noticed, how it affected you, and one concrete need or request. Avoid assuming you know the other person's motives.

What I noticed / what I felt / what I am asking for:

Listen to your tone

Say your words aloud. Notice speed, volume, emphasis, and sarcasm. Can you stay direct while leaving space for an answer? Rehearse hearing something you do not want to hear.

If we disagree, I can respond with:

Words to practice

"Do you have the space for this right now?"
"Help me understand, and then I want to come back to what felt painful for me."
"I need a pause. Can we return to this at seven?"

NEEDS · REPAIR · FOLLOW THROUGH

Choose your next step

Make room for what you need

What has staying quiet helped you avoid, and what has it cost you? Start gently: “What would help me today?” Rest, reassurance, fairness, affection, space, or being heard are places to begin.

One need I can name without judging myself:

Let the action support the apology

Name your own behavior specifically, acknowledge the impact, and explain what you will do differently. Then listen and follow through. Notice whether respect and effort come from both people.

What is mine to repair, and what will I do differently?

Closeness and consent

Address unresolved hurt before expecting closeness. Affection and sex are never owed; respectful behavior does not purchase intimacy. Physical arousal does not establish consent. Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn.

A moment for prayer or quiet reflection

If prayer is part of your practice, bring the upcoming conversation to God. Ask for wisdom, patience, and clarity. Consider how to prepare yourself, while respecting that the other person’s choices remain their own.

My next step: a conversation, a pause, private reflection, or support.

Based on the episode “You’re Talking. But Are You Reaching Each Other?” This guide is for education and personal reflection, not a clinical assessment or a substitute for professional care.