

The Importance of Listening with the Ears of God

- Close Relationships are very difficult
- We are often very selfish, defensive and **unforgiving when wronged**
- We are often very different
- We have a very limited perspective
- We are often very bad listeners without God's help

Mike Mason, “The Mystery of Marriage”

- **Marriage is disturbingly intense, disruptively involving, and that is exactly the way it was designed to be. It is supposed to be more, almost, than we can handle. It was meant to be a lifelong encounter that would be much more rigorous and demanding than anything human beings ever could have chosen, dreamed of, desired, or invented on their own...**

Mike Mason, “The Mystery of Marriage”

- **For that is its very purpose: to get us out beyond our depth, out of the shallows of our own secure egocentricity and into the dangerous and unpredictable depths of a real interpersonal encounter.**

“JOURNEY TO LOVING OTHERS”-Travel Plan

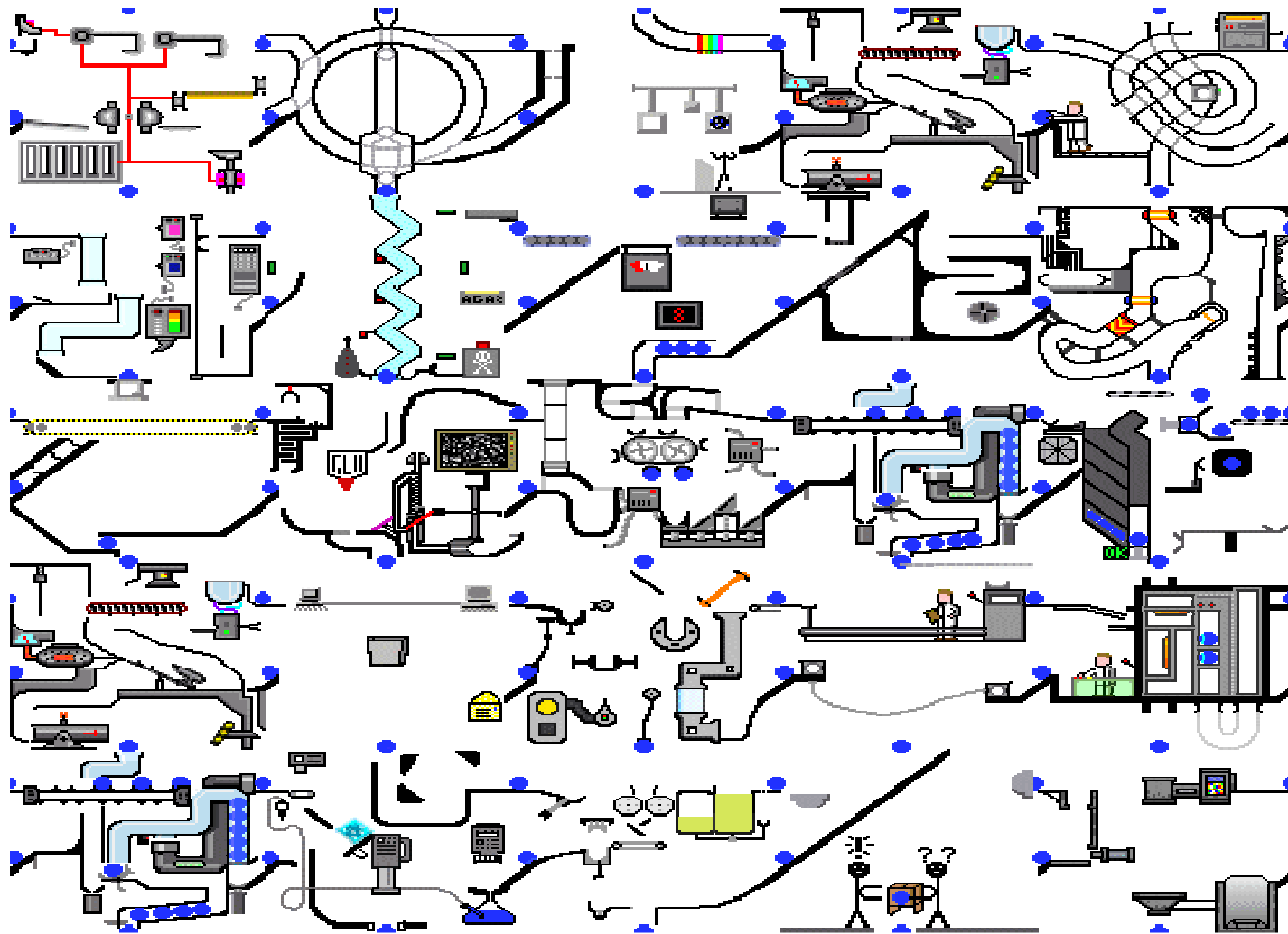
- **Destination**- Peaceful, healthy relationship, each getting their needs met
- **Map**- We need to ask!!! Ever-changing adventure of life stages and trials
- **Vehicles**-
 - We travel in our own vehicle daily
 - We meet up to connect to make one “conflict resolution” vehicle
- **Fuel**- Love and it’s smaller components
- **Avoiding road hazards**- Understanding and accepting each other’s differences & **wrongs**

MAJOR ROADBLOCK (ROAD HAZARD) TO LOVING COMMUNICATION

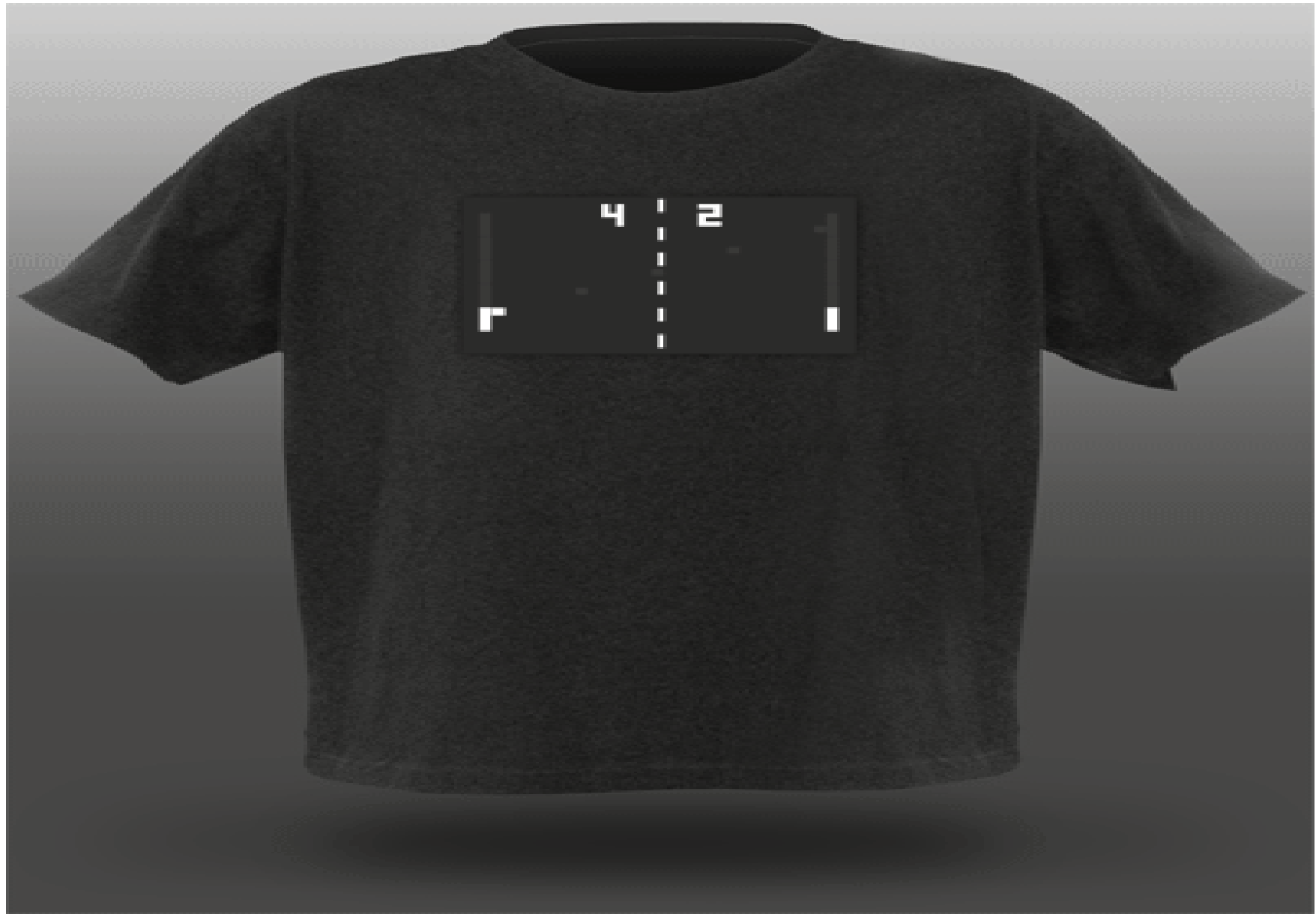
Anger and Resentment

What are Resentments (The BIG road hazard-roadblock!)?

- Holding on to anger, not forgiving, **keeping a record of someone wronging us.**
- Resentments start the record, the list of what we **“don’t like”** about the ones we started out liking a lot
- We are often blind, unaware we have them



Every one of those little blue balls is a thought about something that needs to be done, a decision or a problem that needs to be solved



Our Fuel for the Journey

- **God's Love to drive this “Conflict Resolution” vehicle**
- **Our Fueling Stations**
 - **God's Word**
 - **Christ in us**
 - **The Holy Spirit**
- **Important Reminder-“We are in Training!”**

Major Components of Love

1Co 13:4 Love

- is patient and kind;
- is not jealous
- or conceited
- or proud;

1Co 13:5 Love

- is not ill-mannered
- or selfish
- or irritable;
- love does not keep a record of wrongs;

1Co 13:6 Love

- is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth.

1Co 13:7 Love

- never gives up;
- and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

1Co 13:8 Love

- is eternal.

Talking and Listening- The Smaller Components of Love

Talking (5)

- **W**hat **I** see and hear
- **W**hat **I** think
- **W**hat **I** feel
- **W**hat **I** want for me, them, us and others
- **W**hat **I** do, will do and I've done

Listening (5)

- **P**aying attention
- **E**mpathizing
- **A**sking
- **C**hecking
- **E**ncouraging more

Dietrich Bonhoeffer on “Listening”

- In “Life Together”, his classic on Christian community:
- “The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them...It is God’s love for us that He not only gives us His Word, but also lends us His ear. So it is His work that we do for our brother when we learn to listen to him. Christians, especially ministers...forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.”

The Importance of Listening

“The ministry of listening has been committed to them by Him Who is Himself the great listener, and Whose work they should share. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God.”

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Listening Component 1

- **“Paying attention”** with open stance, eyes, ears and observation (What are they saying and What aren't they saying????)
- **“Paying attention” Handout**
- **Remember we are in training-be patient with yourself and your spouse**

Listening Component II

- **“EMPATHIZING”** - **Attempting** to walk in your loved ones shoes and give feedback
- A short statement, comment that expresses what someone **may** be experiencing
- Be tentative, sensitive
- How are they experiencing their **“Whats”**?
- It’s an attempt, it’s ok to be wrong
- **“Sounds like”, “That sounds”, “Tough day???”**

Listening Component III

- **“ASKING”**-Notice **W**hat they are not saying and ask for more information
- Often we leave out one or two of the **“What”** components when we are talking
- I may not tell you **“What I feel”** or **“What I want”**
- Open, not closed question (yes, no)
- **“How”** or **“What”**

Listening Component IV

- **“CHECKING”** - to see if I got it all?
Summarize what they said and repeat it back as best you can:
 - What they see and hear
 - What they think
 - What they feel
 - What they want for me, them, us and others
 - What they've done, do and will do
 - **IT'S OK TO BE WRONG!!!!!!**

Listening Component V

- **“ENCOURAGING MORE”** - to see if they have more to say? – about:
 - What they see and hear
 - What they think
 - What they feel
 - What they want for me, them, us and others
 - What they've done, do and will do

Now Some Training

- Start simple- **“How was your day?”**
- They talk, you listen in love starting with only the first listening component of five. {each day for a week}
- Add one each week
- Keep notes-What did I hear?
- **Important Reminder-“We are in Training!”**

SIMPLE RULES

- **Box up your “Whats”**
- **No fixing**
- **No judging**
- **Only listen**