



Be attentive: Conversation in the Spirit

Spiritual conversation focuses on the quality of one's capacity to listen and the quality of spoken words. What is going on in oneself and the other person during the conversation? Be attentive to more than simply the words expressed. Accept others *as they are*. There are two necessary attitudes for this process: **active listening** and **speaking from the heart**.

The aim of spiritual conversation is to establish trust and welcome. Being attentive makes us aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the process of discernment.

The focus is on the person to whom we are listening, on ourselves, and on what we are experiencing at a spiritual level. The fundamental question: **What is happening in the other person and in me, and how is the Lord working here?**

ACTIVE LISTENING

- The goal: understand others as they are. Each person is unique.
- Listen not to words but to the meaning of what he or she is experiencing at a deeper level. This means listening with a heart that is open and receptive.
- We listen to each other and do not focus on what we will say afterward.
- We welcome, without judgment, what the other says.
- We must believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the other person.
- Active listening is letting oneself be influenced by the other.
- Active listening demands humility and openness. Take the other person seriously.

SPEAKING FROM THE HEART

- Expressing oneself, one's experience, one's sentiments, and thoughts.
- Speaking from one's experience and what one truly feels and thinks.
- We share the truth as we see it and live it but do not impose it.
- A regular personal practice of prayerful self-examen enriches this process.

Summary

- Listen actively. Be attentive
- Listen to others without judgment
- Pay attention to the words, tone, and feelings of the one who is speaking
- Don't use the time to prepare what you will say instead of listening
- Express your experiences, thoughts, and feelings as clearly as you can
- Listen actively to yourself, your thoughts, and your feelings as you speak
- Monitor possible tendencies to be self-centered when speaking

