



# Heart & soul

**Cate Mackenzie**, our resident love coach, helps readers open their hearts to relationships they never thought possible

## Get yourself heard

*If your needs aren't being met, perhaps it's time to change the way you ask...*

Ask yourself honestly, are you struggling to be heard in a relationship and to get your needs met?

Perhaps you're running yourself ragged trying to find your voice, but it seems like your partner, friends or family are just not listening to how you are and what you need.

Could this be because you're not communicating properly?

First of all, you need to make sure you know what it is you want and how to ask for it properly so you engage people to truly listen.

To do this, you need to be guided by your inner voice, so you can state your needs. Except, in

today's world, it gets drowned out by our day-to-day stresses.

To re-engage with this guiding voice, try taking some time to think about, and get clear in your head, what you need or want, then imagine your needs being met. Once you are grounded and begin to believe that your needs can be met, it's easier to be assertive and ask for what you want.

Relationship expert Alison Armstrong also suggests trying a particular assertive technique called AIDE – ASK, INSIST, DEMAND, ENFORCE.

She says that people often ask a lot from friends, family and partners but don't make it very clear that what they're asking for is really important.

The first step in this technique is to express the importance of what

you're trying to say and keep insisting on being heard.

If you still don't feel you've been heard, you need to demand and then, if you are still not getting your point across, you need to enforce what you're trying to say.

Enforce may sound like a scary word, but it simply means not taking 'no' for an answer and getting really firm about making what you want happen.

As you get used to asking for your needs to be met

clearly, and feeling that you deserve them to be, people around you will start to listen at the ask stage, rather than waiting for you to enforce the issue.

Alison also suggests asking in a certain way, which allows the other person to really take on board what you are saying, and connect with what they need to do to give to you what you want.

A couple I know were struggling because the woman could not get any sleep where they lived due to noisy neighbours.

The husband lacked empathy because he could sleep and

thought his wife needed to simply relax more, and then she'd be less aware of the neighbours.

Her husband just wasn't listening to her needs and the situation was making her feel very low and unwell, so she turned to a friend who suggested she calm down, light a candle, and create

**'Be clear that what you're asking for is important'**

a vision board of what her ideal tranquil haven would look like.

The friend also advised her to start looking for a new home and, if she

found one she liked, to show her husband and he'd be likely to come round to her thinking.

The friend asked the miserable and sleep-deprived wife, 'What is your dream home?'. The wife said it would be a place by the sea.

Well, a lovely little home popped up on the wife's radar, and it was within her and her husband's budget. He agreed to see the place and fell in love with it at first sight. They moved in, things were peaceful, and both slept soundly.

We can all learn from my friend's experience. Once she relaxed and connected to her inner self, she was able to understand what she really wanted and how to ask for it, then, by looking for a property and coming to her husband with a solution, she was able to engage him to truly listen and get herself heard. ■

**WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?**

Cate Mackenzie is a love coach and couples counsellor with more than 20 years' experience. For more information about her work, visit [catemackenzie.com](http://catemackenzie.com)

Learn to get your needs met