

## LISTENING

1. **STOP TALKING** - you can't listen while you are talking
2. **EMPATHIZE WITH THE OTHER PERSON** - try to put yourself in his/her place so you can see what the person is trying to get at
3. **ASK QUESTIONS** - when you don't understand and need further clarification
4. **DON'T GIVE UP TOO SOON** - don't interrupt the other person; give them time to say what they have to say
5. **CONCENTRATE ON WHAT THEY ARE SAYING** - actively focus your attention on their words, ideas and feelings related to the subject
6. **LOOK AT THE OTHER PERSON** - face, mouth, eyes and hands will all communicate
7. **SMILE AND NOD APPROPRIATELY** - but don't overdo it
8. **LEAVE YOUR EMOTIONS BEHIND** - try to push your worries, fears, issues aside
9. **CONTROL YOUR ANGER** - try not to get angry at what the person is saying; your anger may prevent you from understanding words or meanings
10. **GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS** - put down any paper, pencils, etc. you may have in your hands
11. **GET THE MAIN POINTS** - concentrate on the main ideas and not the illustrative material
12. **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION** - only part of the responsibility rests with the speaker. You as the listener have an important part. If you don't understand, get clarification
13. **REACT TO IDEAS, NOT TO THE PERSON** - don't let your reactions to the person influence your interpretation of what is said. Ideas may be good even if you don't like the person.
14. **DON'T ARGUE MENTALLY** - when you are trying to understand the other person, it is a handicap to argue mentally while they are speaking. This sets up a barrier between you and the speaker.

15. **USE THE DIFFERENCE IN RATE** - you can listen faster than someone can talk so use this rate difference to your advantage. Speech rate is about 100 to 150 words a minute; thinking is about 250 to 500 words per minute.
16. **LISTEN FOR WHAT IS NOT SAID** - sometimes you can learn just as much by determining what was left out as you can by listening to what was said.
17. **LISTEN TO HOW SOMETHING WAS SAID**- a person's attitudes and emotional reactions may be more important than what is said in so many words.
18. **DON'T ANTAGONIZE THE SPEAKER** - you may cause the other person to conceal ideas, emotions and attitudes by antagonizing in any number of ways: arguing, criticizing, taking notes, not taking notes, asking questions, not asking questions etc. Be aware of the effect you are having on the other person. Adapt.
19. **LISTEN FOR PERSONALITY** - As they talk you can begin to find out likes and dislikes, motivations, value systems, what makes them tick.
20. **AVOID JUMPING TO ASSUMPTIONS** - If you make an assumption, be sure to check it out for accuracy. Do not act as if your assumption is true.
21. **AVOID CLASSIFYING THE SPEAKER** - it has some value, but beware! Too frequently we classify a person as one type and then try to fit everything said into what makes sense coming from that type of person.
22. **AVOID HASTY JUDGEMENT** - wait until all the facts are in before making any judgement.
23. **RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN PREJUDICE** - try to be aware of your own feeling toward the speaker, the subject, the occasion etc., and allow for these pre-judgements.

## ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

- ☞ **ENCOURAGING** shows that you are interested in what the other person is saying and it keeps them talking.  
**Example:** Can you tell me more? Go on. And then what happened?
- ☞ **QUESTIONING** is used to get more information and to better understand the problem.  
**Example:** Where did this happen? How long have you been friends?
- ☞ **RESTATING** is a technique in which listeners repeat in their own words the content of what the speaker says. Restating ensures both the speaker and the listener are clear on what is being said. Restating helps the speaker feel heard.  
**Example:** So, you were working together on this project and you disagreed on how you should begin, is that right?
- ☞ **SUMMARIZING** pulls together the basic facts and feelings of what the speaker has said and condenses them into fewer words and in a more precise manner. The objective of summarizing is to identify key concerns.  
**Example:** This seems to be what happened...and you're feeling...right?  
Let me review the main concerns you have expressed.
- ☞ **VALIDATING** acknowledges the worthiness of the other person, even if you do not agree with his or her point of view. Validating helps the other person know that what they're feeling is OK.  
**Example:** I appreciate your willingness to try and resolve this issue.  
I can see how difficult this is for you.  
I can see you're really angry about this.
- ☞ **REFRAMING** changes a negative statement into a more positive statement that is future-focused. Reframing removes blaming or accusatory elements.  
**Example:** *Speaker says:*  
He's a jerk and he's always doing things to tick me off.  
*You say:*  
You're feeling upset over some things he's done and you'd like to work this out so it won't keep happening.
- ☞ **REFLECTING** is a technique where the listener identifies the feeling behind the speaker's thought statement and communicates (reflects) the feeling back to the speaker. Reflecting helps people look at and own their feelings, and it helps them to feel validated.  
**Example:** *Speaker says:*  
I feel that what she did was wrong and unfair.  
*You say:*  
So, you're feeling betrayed and hurt by what happened.
- ☞ **BODY LANGUAGE** conveys strong messages. With body language we can convey positive active listening.  
**Example:** Eye contact, smiling, open (vs. folded) arms, facing the speaker, nodding. Physically focusing on the speaker.



## **THE ELEVENTH STYLE: ASSERTIVENESS**

*Assertiveness is the anger style currently most accepted in American society. That may be because assertiveness emphasizes the core American concepts of equality and democracy: everyone's voice is important and everybody has a right to be heard. Although there are many opinions about what constitutes assertive behavior, the key elements seem to be:*

- ✓ Taking into account as equally important both one's own needs and the needs of others.
- ✓ Declining aggression, defined as caring only about one's own needs and/or verbally or physically attacking another person.
- ✓ Declining passivity, defined as giving in to other people's demands and/or by accepting verbal or physical attack.
- ✓ Being willing to negotiate fairly and respectfully when conflict arises.
- ✓ Seeking mutually positive outcomes that allow everybody to feel positive both about the results and the interaction process.
- ✓ Sometimes, but not always, seeking to deal with people's emotions as an important aspect of the problem solving process.
- ✓ The use of specific techniques such as the "I" statements that maximize the opportunity for mutually beneficial problem resolution.
- ✓ Paying continuing attention to the *process* of negotiation as well as to the content.

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