

THE ART OF ACTIVE LISTENING

What is Active Listening?

Active Listening is a communication technique used in counseling, training, and conflict resolution. It requires that the listener fully concentrate, understand, respond, and then remember what is being said. It's all about building rapport, understanding, and trust.



1. **Restating:** to show that you are listening, repeat every so often what you think the person said, by paraphrasing it in your own words.

2. **Summarizing:** bring together the facts and pieces of the problem to check understanding.

3. **Minimal Encouragers:** use brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and to show you are listening.

4. **Giving Feedback:** let the person know your initial thoughts. Share pertinent information, observations, insights, and experiences. Then listen carefully to confirm.

5. **Emotion Labeling:** putting feelings into words will often help a person to see things more objectively.

6. **Validation:** acknowledge the problems, issues, and feelings. Listen openly and with empathy.

7. **Silence:** allow for comfortable silence to slow down the exchange. Give a person time to think as well as to talk.

8. **Redirecting:** if someone is showing signs of being overly aggressive, agitated, or angry, shift the discussion to another topic.

9. **Consequences:** talk about possible consequences of inaction.

Communication



Roadblocks

These roadblocks to communication can stop communication in its tracks:

- ◆ “Why” questions - these tend to make people defensive.
- ◆ Quick reassurance - saying things like, “Don’t worry about that.”
- ◆ Advising - “I think the best thing for you to do is...”
- ◆ Digging for information and forcing someone to talk about something they would rather not talk about.
- ◆ Patronizing - “You poor thing, I know just how you feel.”
- ◆ Preaching - “You should” or “You shouldn’t.”
- ◆ Interrupting - shows you aren’t interested in what someone is saying.

5 Simple Conversation Courtesies:

- “Excuse me...”
- “Pardon me...”
- “Do you have a quick moment?”
- “Let’s talk about solutions.”
- “May I suggest something?”

**The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand.
We listen to reply.**

The Art of Questioning

Leading

- ◇ What would you like to talk about?
- ◇ Could you tell me more?

Open-Ended

- ◇ What do you think about...?
- ◇ Give me an example...

Closed-Ended

- ◇ Would you be okay if I talked to...?
- ◇ Do you think your roommate stole...?

Reflective

- ◇ It sounds like you’re feeling...
- ◇ You’re feeling really torn between the two, aren’t you?