

Active Listening

Hear and Understand Content and Feeling in Communications

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WHEN DO WE USE ACTIVE LISTENING?

Leaders and Managers need to be able to listen to employees.

Sales Associates need to understand the true customer needs, requirements, wants and desires.

Customer Service Associates need to understand and be compassionate to customer complaints, issues and requests.

Colleagues need to understand and appreciate the views, requests, requirements and perspectives of peers.

Any person in contact with customers needs to use active listening.

Any person in contact with colleagues needs to use active listening.

Any person negotiating contracts needs to use active listening.

Any person who manages vendors, partner, affiliates or buyers needs to use active listening.

Any person who provides support, consolation, direction, or interpersonal relationship with other individuals can use Active Listening.

Parents can use Active Listening.

Can you think of other opportunities?

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PURPOSE OF ACTIVE LISTENING

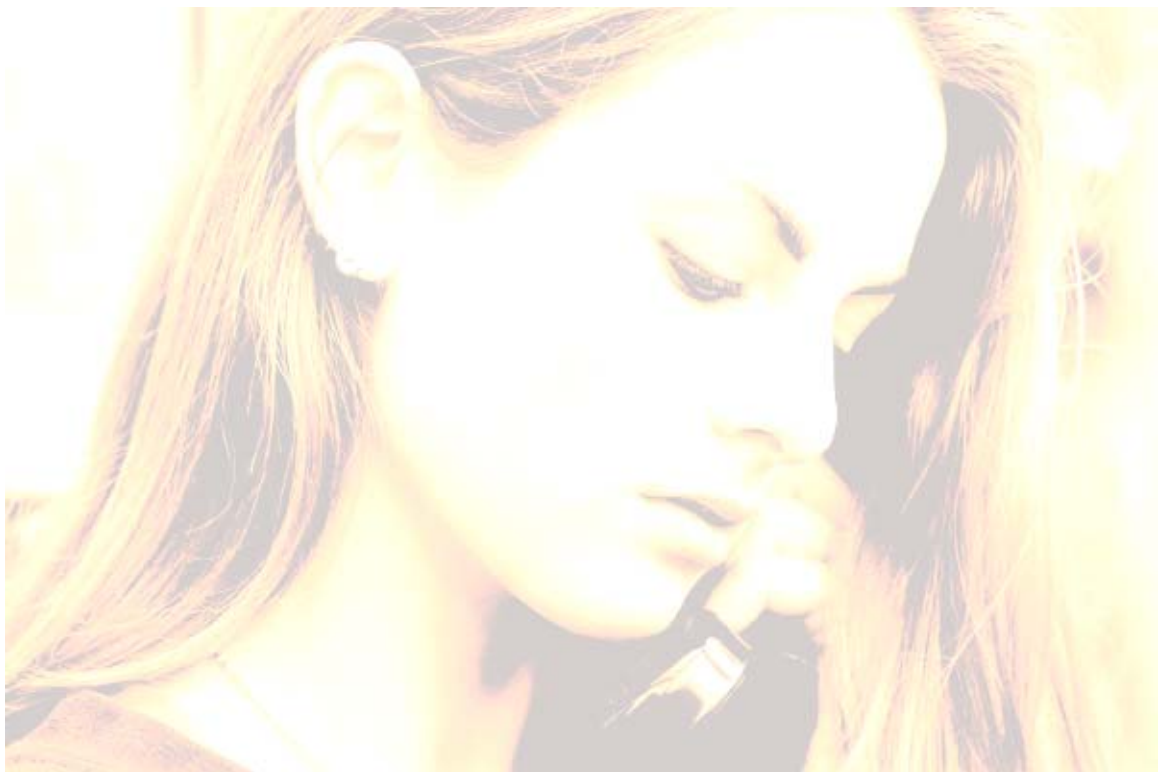
As the individual listening, you should . . .

- ❑ **Hear and Understand the content and feeling of another's message**
 - **Promote the expression of content and feeling**
 - **Convey that the speaker's message is important and valued**
 - **Confirm that the message is important and valued**
 - **Provide opportunity for speaker to hear their own message**

How can you help someone else feel confident to express personal feelings as well as content during discussion or communication?

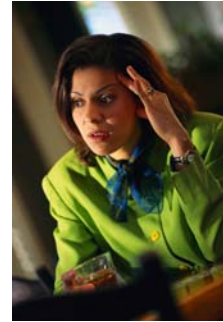
How can you convey and confirm that the message is important and valued?

How can you make sure that the person speaking hears the message?



INEFFECTIVE LISTENING HABITS

- Thoughts are somewhere else, tuning out the speaker
- You think that you know what will be said next
- Distracted by sights or activity, not listening
- Emotional response distracts you from listening
- Thinking about what you are going to say next
- Concentrating on something else
- Not listening from the perspective of the speaker



Partner Exercise:

Sit back-to-back with a partner. Both people use a watch or clock to keep track of the time, use a 15 Second time limit. Within 15 seconds, both people simultaneously provide instructions from the current meeting location back to their own home.

Make sure that you can hear your own voice very well.

Make sure you complete the full instructions within 15 Seconds.

Stop at the end of 15 Seconds.

Did you finish your instructions?

Then:

Both people look at each other and take turns describing the instructions provided by the other.

How accurate are the instructions HEARD while thinking about giving instructions?

Exact – Accurate – Missed a Detail – Missed Important Details - Lost

What was the emotion of the other person when they provided the original instructions?

Can you tell the emotion of an individual from the inflection of their voice, without seeing facial expressions?

Try this again, taking turns and looking at each other. Compare the results.

ATTENDING SKILLS



Physical Skills

- Face the speaker directly
- Have an “Open Posture” (Open Arms, not crossed, not defensive)
- Lean towards the speaker (indicates involvement and interest)
- Maintain direct eye contact
- Remain relaxed (no fidgeting, not rigid, comfortable and open)
- Create a relaxing and comfortable environment for the speaker

Practice sitting with an open and receptive pose.
Maintain good posture or lean forward if standing.
Prepare your environment.
Does it welcome a comfortable conversation?



Following Skills

- Do not interrupt the speaker
- Do not divert the speaker by asking too many questions
- Do not divert the speaker with too many statements or observations
- Do not “fill in” words or complete sentences (let the speaker finish)
- Encourage the speaker to tell their own story
 - ❖ Use prompters like “yes”, “go on”, and “I understand”
 - ❖ Nod your head, show subtle signs of attentiveness
- Allow time for Silence
 - ❖ Allow speaker time to reflect and prepare the next dialogue

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REFLECTIVE SKILLS



Paraphrase

- Accurately restate the speaker's message
- Use your own language to convey factual information only

Paraphrase the following conversation

On a job Interview: *"The last person who had this job was very dynamic and energetic. The customers loved that personal attention and it was reflected in the numbers. These are some really big shoes to fill, because these are demanding customers and they do not put up with delays, inconvenience or mistakes. Some people just can't handle the pressure or the demands of the position. Once you learn the financial aspect and the processes, then you have to deal with the customers. Do you have any experience like that?"*

Reflection of feeling

- Accurately restate your perception of the emotions of the speaker

Practice Reflection of feeling

Responding to a customer complaint: *"You can't possibly understand how I feel because nobody at your company cares about my problem. I have called five different numbers and talked to people in at least two different countries. You keep asking the same questions, but nobody is paying attention to my answers. How can you not know what I just told four other people before you? Are you going to help me, or are you just going to pass me off to another phone number to get rid of me, like all of the other people did?"*

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Focusing

- Keep the flow of the conversation goal directed and specific

Practice Focusing

Responding to an employee complaint: *"I don't think that the members of the other department are doing their fair share. They don't know what it is like to have to deal with these issues. We see the problems and we tell them about the problems, but they don't seem to care about fixing the problems. It seems to get worse every single day, and they just ignore it. How can they get away with letting this situation continue?"*

Clarifying

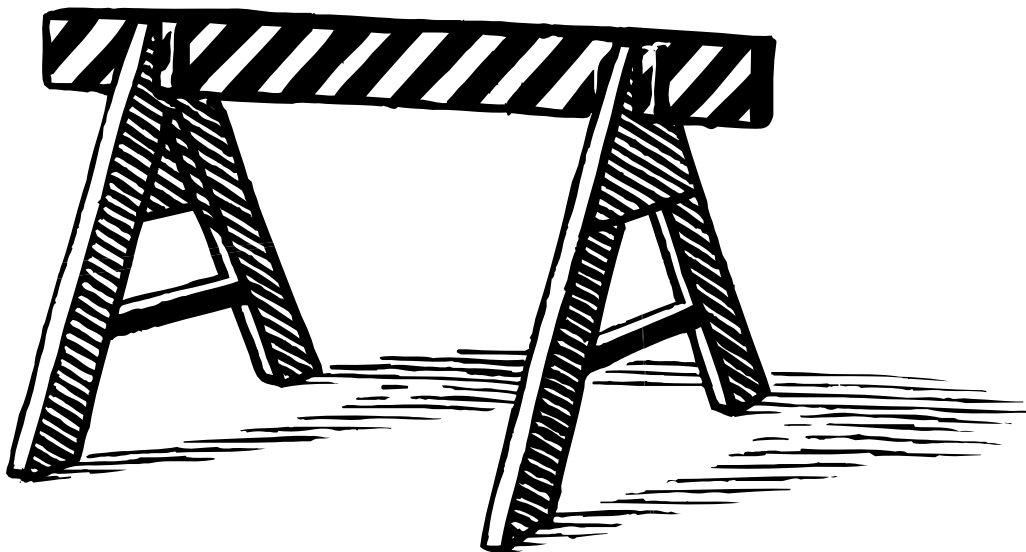
- Attempt to understand vague, confusing or unclear communication

Practice Clarifying

Responding to a request or opportunity: *"We need to have something that fits in our budget, but I don't want to be too cheap either. It won't do us any good if we can't get the performance that we need, so we need to spend enough to get the performance, but no more than we have to spend. It is tough enough to get this kind of budget approved in the first place. I do not want to have to ask for more, but I have to spend it or I will lose the money in the budget. What can you do for me?"*

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- Negative Remarks
 - “That’s nothing”, “That’s ridiculous”, or “That’s impossible”
Instead try, *“You sound very concerned”*
- Accusations
 - “You can’t be serious”, or “You should know better”
Instead try, *“Help me understand a little better”*
- Assumptions
 - “I know exactly what that feels like”
Instead try, *“I had a similar situation one time”*
- Directives or Advice
 - “You should”, “You need to try to”, or “Don’t do that”
Instead try, *“Something that worked for me in the past is”*
- Clichés
 - “Everything will work out just fine”, or “Hang in there”
Instead try, *“It sounds serious”*
- Judging Values
 - “That is terrible”, or “That was bad”
Instead try, *“It sounds like it was difficult for you”*



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TEST YOUR SKILLS

Check these statements. As an active listener, would you use these statements or would you phrase them differently?

Use It	Statement	Rephrase It
	Your situation reminds me of a situation that happened to me	
	Please help me understand why you feel that way	
	That bad break was one in a million, it will never happen again	
	I would never do something so outrageous	
	I can only imagine how that must have made you feel	
	Can you repeat that? I thought you were going to say . . .	
	You have to learn to separate your feelings and deal with it.	
	Hopefully that is the end of the story	
	Can you repeat that? I am not sure that I understood . . .	
	Yes, I see	

Rephrase _____

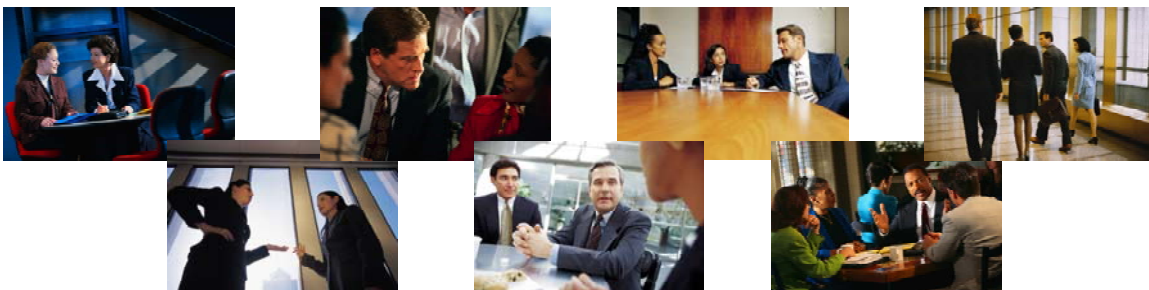
Rephrase _____

Rephrase _____

Rephrase _____

Rephrase _____

- In what situations can you apply “Active Listening”
- How can you avoid Ineffective Listening Habits
- Practice Attending Skills
- Practice Reflective Skills
- Pause, Think and Circumnavigate the Communication Barriers

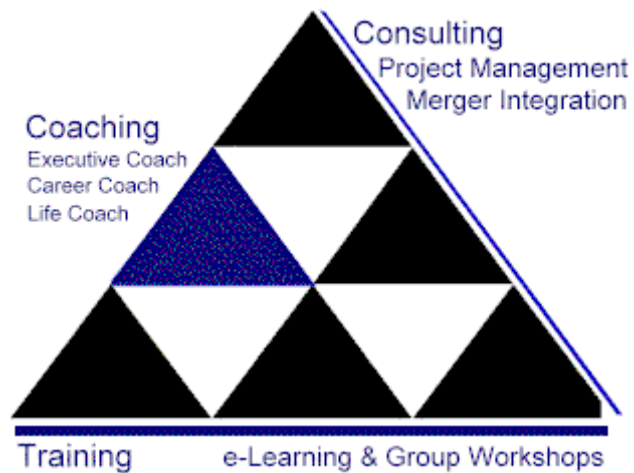


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