

Listening 101

- We have two ears and one mouth so we should listen twice as much as we speak. (Proverbs 18:13.)
- 55% of communication is body language; 38% of communication is voice; 7% of communication is words.
- Communication always happens in context.
 - ❶ Physical context: This is the physical surroundings and the physical events happening at the time.
 - ❷ Mental context: This is the thought processes going on at the time. Most if not all people have some ingrained automatic thought processes that may be positive or negative.
 - ❸ Emotional context: This is the emotional state of the person at the time.
 - ❹ Spiritual context: This has to do with one's spiritual life and beliefs. Those with an active spiritual life have more resources than those without an active spiritual life.
- Be aware of your own communication. Your body language, voice, and words need to work together to communicate the message you desire.
- Look for consistencies in the other person's body language, voice, and words.
- Look for inconsistencies in the other person's body language, voice, and words.
- When in doubt, ask. Be polite and ask straightforward questions.
- You can listen without agreeing.
- Open ended questions encourage further communication. These are questions that need answering with more than a one or two word answer. Some phrases to keep in your toolbox:
 - 👉 Tell me more about that.
 - 👉 Say more about that.
 - 👉 Help me understand what you are saying.
 - 👉 Tell me how you feel about that. (This gets to emotion. Is the emotion appropriate for the circumstances?)
 - 👉 Tell me what you think about that. (This gets to cognitive processes. Are the thought processes appropriate for the circumstances?)
- Closed ended questions ask for short, one or two word answers. These are best used for obtaining factual information. (E.g. did you pick up the milk?)
- Become comfortable with silence. (Job 2:13)
- Be an active listener.
 - 👉 Make eye contact. Look in only one eye. Hold eye contact for one to three sentences and then look away slightly. Reestablish eye contact in one or two sentences.
 - 👉 Show that you are listening through body language and facial expressions.
 - 👉 Use "tracking statements" when listening. E.g. "Uh huh," "ok," etc. These are meant to let the person know you are listening without stopping their flow of communication.
 - 👉 Use "restatement" to make sure you are hearing what they say. This is to make sure you have received the content or the words. You can paraphrase but try to stay close to the words the other person uses.
 - 👉 "Reflective listening" gets to the emotion the person is feeling. It is a paraphrase with an emotional interpretation, "So you're saying...and you feel..." This is a deeper listening which requires that you take in all 100% of the person's communication in conjunction with the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual context.
- Learn to use "feeling words."
- People always have the right not to speak. If they do not want to talk, let them know you care and are willing to listen if they decide they want to talk.
- When both people feel completely understood, 70% of the time problems are solved.

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