

The Art of Active Listening



We often spend most of our communication energy trying to get *our* point across and feel understood and heard by others. Challenge yourself to *really* listen to others and see if you notice a shift and improvement in your relationships through improved communication.

What is active listening? Active listening is the act of truly taking in what someone else is saying with full attention. The purpose is to genuinely try to understand the speaker. This seemingly simple act alone can improve personal and work relationships.

Components of active listening include the following:

- Setting aside judgement
- Refraining from interrupting, cutting the speaker off, or jumping to conclusions
- Remain focused – make eye contact, lean in, use open body language
- Repeat or paraphrase what the speaker said to check for understanding
- Ask clarifying questions

In conversations we often skip the listening step and jump straight to label someone's intentions, fix the situation, or problem solve. Often the speaker just wants to get something across and feel heard. Being an active listener takes patience and practice, but the benefit of improved relationships are often well worth the effort.

Are you interested in improving your communications with others? Contact your EAP today.

Grande, Dianne. "Active Listening Skills". Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-it-together/202006/active-listening-skills> Retrieved February 4, 2021.



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