

ACTIVE LISTENING

12 Techniques to Try

How well you listen greatly impacts the quality of your relationships and the work you do. We're not talking about how well you hear. We're not talking about waiting for your turn to speak. We're talking about how well you understand what others are trying to convey. Try a few of these skills and see how they change your engagement with others.

Give Undivided Attention

You'd be surprised how often we need to remind ourselves of this. Put your distractions aside (thoughts and tangibles) and tune into the dialogue.

Don't Interrupt

Withhold judgement and wait for the other person to complete their point before trying any of the next tips. Remember, it's not a competition.

Give Feedback

Respectfully share your opinions and questions about the topic. Be open and use "I" statements to let the other person know what you feel and why.

Reflect with Feeling

Confirm how the person is feeling about the topic.
"This seems really important to you..."

Probe to Get Deeper

Ask questions to draw the person out and get more substantive information.
"What do you think would happen if..."

Listen to Your Own Cues

Clear the air about any tensions or reactions you are having by stating it and asking for clarification.

Show That You're Listening

Keep an open posture, nod, display appropriate facial reactions, and use short verbal comments like "yes," "oh?" and "uh-huh."

Summarize to Check

Connect the dots of what you've heard and check for understanding.
"So it sounds to me like..."

Restate to Demonstrate

Occasionally paraphrase what you think the person said to show that you are listening and understanding.
"I heard you say..."

Use Emotion Labeling

Putting feelings into words can help you both reach an "a-ha" moment.
"I'm sensing that you're feeling frustrated/worried..."

Leverage Silence

Sit in the space of 2-5 breaths to give you and the other person time to slow down and process.

Validate & Appreciate

If you're having a tough conversation, acknowledge the challenges and express appreciation for the other person's willingness to dig in.