

Active Listening

Activity (10 min)

Choose one activity of the following :

Listening Test Game

If you know this test please do not reveal the answers to others. Do not make any sounds when you figure out the answer as it may give a clue to others.

Pretend that you are a bus driver.

It is your job to drive the Main Street Bus.

One day you get on the bus and you start to count.

At the first stop 5 people get on your bus.

At the next stop 3 people get on and 2 people get off the bus.

At the next stop 2 people get off the bus.

At the next stop 3 people get on and 1 person gets off the bus.

Here is the question. What color are the eyes of the bus driver?

Raise your hand if you know the answer.

(Usually at this point less than 25 % of the group will know the answer.

Repeat the question

(According to research by the authors. 87% of the people taking the test for the first time will not be able to correctly answer the question. The second time people are given the test immediately following the first test 50% will still not be able to answer correctly. The third time people are given the test on the same day immediately following the preceding test 20% will still not be able to answer correctly.)

Gossip

The "gossip" game in which a person tells one person a short story(three to four sentences that are written down), the listener then whispers the story to his neighbor, and this continues until the last person tells the story out loud. The object is to see how much the story is changed in the translation. Do this activity. To demonstrate the benefits of effective listening, do the same activity but have the participants use good listening skills rather than just whispering into each others' ears. For the purpose of this exercise, the leader will take one person out of the room or away from the group and tell a different story. This will allow the speaker and listener to use good skills instead of whispering the story in each other's ear. Once the story is told, the leader calls another student away from the group and observes while the previous listener tells the new person the story. This should continue until all students get a chance to listen. If the group is too big, stop the activity after about five to ten minutes. Gather the whole group together and have the last listener tell the story. The trainer should read the original story so the class can compare.

Selective Listening

Divide a large group into Group A and B. Then ask some people from group A to pay close attention to the story you tell and ask them to calculate the number of times you say the word 'then'. Ask some others to count the number of times you say the word 'so'. Do not give any such instructions to group B. Then relate a short story to them. At the end of the story, ask them questions relating to the story. You'll find that the people from group A who were asked to calculate the words 'then' and 'so' will be unable to answer the questions related to the story, while those from group B will have no such problem. This game shows you the different types of listening and how it works.

Becoming an Active Listener (10 min)

Listening Facts :

- 10% = Words
- 55% = Body Language
- 35% = Tone of Voice

10% is Content; 90% is Intent

Listening improves communications

Listening shows your care

Listening shows respect for the person

There are five key elements of active listening.

1. Full Listening

Use your own **body language** and gestures to convey your attention.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.

2. Deep Listening

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.

- Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language.
- Refrain from side conversations when listening in a group setting.

3. Reflective listening

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is." and "Sounds like you are saying." are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say." "Is this what you mean?"
- Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.
- Ask Open ended questions

Tip: If you find yourself responding emotionally to what someone said, say so, and ask for more information: "I may not be understanding you correctly, and I find myself taking what you said personally. What I thought you just said is XXX; is that what you meant?"

4. Sympathetic listening

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.
- Don't judge the speaker
- pay close attention and express your sorrow for their depress, happiness and what they are feeling

5. Facilitative Listening

This goes beyond even sympathetic listening because it implies and requires that you are able to extend an especially helpful approach to the other person or people.

- First ask the speaker of his own ideas about how to solve his problem
- Be, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.

Case Study in Groups (15 min)

Questions on the Cases

- Did the person utilize active listening techniques at any point in this conversation?
- Using the above example, incorporate active listening skills into the conversation
- How do you think active listening skills would have benefited both persons in the case?

Case 1

Ted and Donna have been married since 8 years now having a girl and a boy already in pre-school , one day while the kids were in their rooms doing their homework , Donna was standing in the kitchen preparing the dinner when Ted entered the kitchen to take a glass of water , and here was the dialogue :

Donna : You are not talking with me anymore Ted

Ted (facing the ref. and giving her his back) : What do you mean by not talking to you , than what am I doing now ?

Donna : I don't mean this kind of talk

Ted (while looking at his mobile) : what kind of talk do you mean ?

Donna : I mean talking about important things

Ted (still busy with his phone) : like what ?

Donna (with tears in her eyes) : Like anything ... like how do I feel Or what do you feel Or anything

Ted (looking angrily to her) : well what I feel is that you are bothering me ... I don't know exactly what do you want I have work to do now ...ok !!!

Donna (with tears falling) : Bothering you ?? Ok forget it , I am sorry that I have asked for a talk !!

Tod (putting his phone in his pocket , with bored facial expressions) : Ok Donna , talk I am listening

Donna (angrily) : I don't want to talk ... OK

Ted : What do you mean by your tears ?? I don't understand what is the matter with you ? Are you asking for a quarrel? I am going out ? I can't bare you being so miserable all the time !!!!

Case 2 :

John was an active servant at his church while he was in college, after he finished his studies, he was so busy in his new work and also he decided to marry, all the marriage details took a big part of his time . Few months after his marriage he was sitting alone thinking of how much he misses the service and was feeling bad that nobody from the church is asking about him , he decided to go and meet the service leader next service day and have a talk with him , here was the dialogue :

John : Hi Mr. Josseph , do you remember me ?

Josseph : Ahhhh John !!! how are you dear , it has been a long time

John : Yes Sir , how much I miss you and the serviceCan I have a little talk with you ?

Josseph : Sure one minute I will give some instructions to the servants and come back to you .

Few minutes later

Josseph : Ah John , we miss you dear .

John : Well if you really miss me you would have asked !!

Josseph (after talking to one of the servants) : Sorry John ... what were you saying ??

John : Well , I was saying that I feel bad that nobody from the service is asking about me anymore .

Josseph : (after replying to a phone call) : John you are getting too hard on me , I was expecting that especially you will never say something like this , you were so close to me and know exactly how much I am exhausted and busy in the many services I am involved in . Sometime I don't have even a time to go to my work .

John : I thought I am someone special to you and not just one of many !!

Josseph (busy following the movements of the servants) : Everybody and every service is special to me John , anyway I have to go and meet Abouna now , you are welcomed at any time to re-join the service ..ok , give me a call when you are ready !!

John (standing to leave) : thanks for your precious time , I will think about it .

Case 3 :

Lora is a teenage girl , one day she was back from her school , she dashed into her home searched for her mother who was busy in the kitchen preparing the lunch for the family .

Lora threw her school bag at the floor and cried angrily : I will never go to this school again

Mother (was facing the oven and testing the food) : Lora go out now I am busy

Lora (kicking the chair with her foot) : I am talking to you , can you look at me

Mother : Don't you see I am busy

Lora : I am more important

Mother (still busy) : I must finish the food before your father comes , GO OUT

Lora (screaming) : I hate my life , I hate the school ...AND I WILL NOT GO TO SCHOOL AGAIN

Mother (throwing the spoon to the floor) : Nonsense, you always say same thing and then you go , you just love to bother me

Lora (crying and dashing out of the kitchen) : Nobody understands me

Mother (shouting) : Nobody is helping me in this house , I am exhausted

Reflection on Case Studies (30 min)

Each group will act his case as written, then discuss with the others the mistakes done in the conversation , and then re-act the case using the Active Listening tools .