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Active Listening (listening for the total meaning)

The goal of Active Listening is for the listener to understand the situation from the speaker's perspective.

The Listener's job is to try to understand:

- What the speaker *feels*.
- What the speaker's *thoughts and ideas* are.
- What the speaker *needs or wants*.

The Basics of Active Listening:

i. Listen

- Attend closely to what is said, both verbally and non-verbally.
- Active Listening requires energy, attention, and concentration.
- Make sure body language reflects that you're listening.
- Active Listening requires demonstrating interest, attention, and Encouragement.

ii. Reflect

- Restate what you heard to check meaning.
- Offer feedback indicating what you think was said or implied.
- Separate content from feeling to deal with each appropriately.
- Recognize and validate both *content* and *feelings* to arrive at the speaker's true *meaning*.

iii. Clarify and Summarize

- Question without challenging.
- Invite corrections and accept them gracefully.
- Make every effort to understand what the speaker intended by summarizing what you heard.

Examples of Roadblocks to Good Listening

Fixing

- Ordering
- Suggesting
- Advising
- Diagnosing

Diverting

- Reassuring
- Changing the subject
- Focusing on your own agenda
- Minimizing

Evaluating

- Judging
- Threatening
- Praising
- Taking Sides
- Giving opinions

Interrupting

- Interjecting comments
- Not allowing speaker's own pace
- Faking it (wandering mind)
- Creating/responding to distractions
- Cross-examining

Examples of Active Listening Responses

Responses that Reflect the Speaker's Feelings

- "It sounds like you're pretty angry about the situation."
- "It seems like you felt confused and worried when that happened."
- "So, you're saying that you were feeling more frightened than angry."

Responses that Paraphrase or Clarify

- "What you seem to be saying is..."
- "What I'm hearing is..."
- "Can you say more about...?"
- "Did I understand you to be saying...?"
- "Would you remind of when that happened?"

Responses that Summarize the Speaker's Main Points (ideas and thoughts)

- "So, you'd like to talk about ..."
- "Let me summarize what I heard so far."
- "So, on one the hand... but on the other hand..."
- "I think I've heard several things that seem to be important to you, first...second...third"

A Cheat-Sheet for Active Listening

- “So, from your point of view...”
- “It sounds as if...”
- “It sounds like you feel . . .”
- “So, you’re saying that . . .”
- “I wonder if. . . .”
- “So what you mean is. . . .”
- “So it seems to you that. . . .”
- “As you see it . . .”

A Cheat-Sheet for “Feeling” Words

Concerned	Stymied	Ripped-off
Desperate	Hurt	Betrayed
Confused	Astonished	Concerned
Angry	Overwhelmed	Joyful
Frustrated	Surprised	Disappointed
Discouraged	Scared	Hopeful
Annoyed	Terrified	Great
Belittled	Upset	Irritated
Patronized	Uncertain	Isolated
Put-Down	Important	Left-out
Understood	Guilty	Relieved
Turned off	Blamed	Cared for
Pleased	Content	Proud
Uncomfortable	Shamed	Up-tight
Resentful	Defensive	Wanted
Misunderstood	Discounted	Hateful
On the spot	Embarrassed	Afraid
Unimportant	Attacked	Loved
Hopeless	Considered	Squeezed
Encouraged	Intruded upon	Uncomfortable
Confident	Intimidated	
Envious	Ignored	
Dissatisfied	Comforted	
Worried	Sad	
Affectionate	Anxious	
Resigned	Disturbed	
Tired	Rejected	
Enthusiastic	In a bind	
Puzzled	Delighted	
Threatened	Infuriated	