

Listen Up: The Art and Science of Active Listening

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Welcome

30 years experience in schools

Teacher from 5-18+

Primary and Secondary School Leadership

Certified Level 2 coaching

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Why listen?

Role in communication



Building relationships



Facilitates learning



The Science of Listening





Active vs Normal Listening

- Listening is an active process, whereas hearing is a passive process
- Listening requires paying attention, whereas hearing requires no concentration or attention skills
- Listening requires empathy, curiosity, and motivation, whereas hearing is associated with being disconnected
- Listening is a skill that is necessary to have effective communication, whereas hearing is not a great communication skill.
- Listening is an internal behaviour that involves both the mind and body, whereas hearing is a physical act that only involves the ears.

Role of Active Listening





Undivided Listening



1. **Memorable Journey:** Describe a memorable trip or journey you've taken in the past. What made it special? Who were you with, and what did you learn from the experience?
2. **Passions & Hobbies:** Talk about a hobby or passion of yours. How did you get into it? What do you love most about it? If it's a skill, describe your journey of learning and mastering it.
3. **Dream Job:** If you weren't in your current profession, what would your dream job be? Why does that particular role appeal to you?
4. **Childhood Memory:** Share a vivid childhood memory. Where were you? Who were you with? How does this memory shape or influence who you are today?
5. **Books & Stories:** Describe a book that has profoundly impacted you or a story that has stayed with you over the years. What was the story about, and why did it resonate with you?



Reflections

For the Speaker:

1. **Feeling Valued:** How did it feel to have someone's undivided attention for the entire duration you spoke? Did you feel more valued or understood?
2. **Expressing Fully:** Were you more inclined to express your thoughts fully, knowing you wouldn't be interrupted? Did you find yourself sharing more details or diving deeper into your story?
3. **Non-Verbal Cues:** Did you notice any non-verbal cues from the listener that reinforced their engagement? How did these cues influence the way you communicated?

For the Listener:

1. **Challenges Faced:** What challenges did you face while listening without responding? Were there moments you felt a strong urge to interject or ask questions?
2. **Key Takeaways:** What did you learn or discover about the speaker that you might have missed if you were formulating a response simultaneously?
3. **Self-awareness:** Were you aware of your own non-verbal reactions? Did you consciously or subconsciously provide any feedback, like nodding or facial expressions, to the speaker?

Power of Questions

What if it works out exactly as you want it to?



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How can you contribute more?



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What is it we're not seeing?



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What does that cost you?



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What skills can you use?



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Can you speak more to that?



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How do you know?



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Can you try it for a week?



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What is the challenge?



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Tools and Techniques

- Clarify
- Pay attention
- Withhold judgement
- Summarise
- Share
- Reflect





Tools and Techniques

Examples of Roadblocks to Good Listening

| Fixing | Evaluating | Diverting | Interrupting |
|--|---|---|--|
| Ordering Suggesting Advising Diagnosing | Judging Threatening Praising Condemning Taking sides Giving opinions | Reassuring Changing the subject Focusing on your own agenda Minimizing | Interjecting comments Not allowing speaker's own pace Tuning out Creating/responding to distractions Cross-examining |



Tools and Techniques

| Do's | Don'ts |
|---|--|
| <p>Listen More than you talk</p> <p>Let the speaker finish before you respond.</p> <p>Asks open-ended questions</p> <p>Remain attentive to what's being said</p> <p>Be aware of your own biases</p> <p>Manage your own emotions</p> <p>Be attentive to ideas and problem-solving opportunities</p> <p>Give verbal and nonverbal messages that you are listening</p> <p>Listen for both feelings and content</p> | <p>Dominate the conversation</p> <p>Interrupt</p> <p>Finish the speaker's sentences</p> <p>Jump to conclusions</p> <p>Respond with blaming or accusatory language</p> <p>Become argumentative</p> <p>Demonstrate impatience or multitask</p> <p>Mentally compose your responses about what to say next</p> <p>Listen with biases or shut out new ideas</p> |



Observing listening skills

1. Engagement Level
2. Non-Verbal Cues
3. Interruptions
4. Feedback Sounds
5. Response Formulation
6. Empathetic Responses
7. Open vs. Closed Body Language
8. Question Quality
9. Presence of Bias
10. Clarity and Paraphrasing

Reflections





Cultural Nuances

Eye Contact:

Western Cultures: Direct eye contact is often seen as a sign of attentiveness and honesty.

Some Asian and Native American Cultures: Direct eye contact can be seen as rude or confrontational. Averting eyes might be a sign of respect.

Silence:

Western Cultures: Extended silence can be seen as awkward or a signal that something is wrong.

Japanese Culture: Silence can be seen as a sign of respect, giving the other person time to think and formulate a response.

Feedback Sounds:

U.S. and Canada: People might nod and say "uh-huh" to indicate they are listening.

Finland and Russia: Less vocal affirmation might be given, but that doesn't mean they are not listening.

Interruptions:

Middle Eastern Cultures: It might be more common to interrupt as a sign of engagement and interest in the conversation.

Northern European Cultures: Interruptions might be considered rude, and individuals may wait for a complete pause before speaking.

Physical Distance:

Latin American and Middle Eastern Cultures: People might stand closer to the person they are speaking to as a sign of trust and friendship.

North American and Northern European Cultures: People might prefer more personal space during a conversation.

Emotive Expressions:

Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Cultures: People might be more emotive, using hand gestures and raised voices to emphasize points.

East Asian Cultures: People might be more reserved, keeping emotions in check.

High Context vs. Low Context:

High Context (e.g., Japan, China): A lot of meaning is conveyed in non-verbal cues or the context of a message rather than the words themselves.

Low Context (e.g., U.S., Germany): Most of the information is communicated directly through explicit words.

Listening to Agree vs. Listening to Debate:

U.S. and Western European Cultures: It's common to challenge or debate a point for clarity.

Many Asian Cultures: It might be seen as disrespectful to directly challenge someone, especially a superior.

Levels of Formality:

Korean Culture: Depending on someone's status or age, the way you listen and the formality of your response might vary significantly.

Australian Culture: There's a tendency for informality and using colloquial language even in formal settings.



Take aways?

What do you think the difference is between passive and active listening?

What impact could a focus on active listening have?

In what ways can this be applied in the classroom?

LISTENING

IS A TRUST-
BUILDING
EXERCISE

SIMON SINEK



Questions and Next Steps

What's one thing that you will do differently?

