



Listening and Communication

Active Listening

Active listening is a great way to understand what the speaker is trying to tell you. It will also help reduce conflict that may result in a breakdown of communication.

How active listening can change the game:

- It shows the other person you are listening to them. This can encourage them to continue sharing.
- It gives the other person space to clarify what they have said in case you heard it wrong.
- It lets the other person know that you have accurately heard them.

3 Components of Communication

1. Verbal: the actual words we speak.
2. Non-verbal: eye contact, hand gestures, body posture.
3. Tone: how we say something – soft, loud.

Sometimes, the message can be lost in communication. This can be a result of: what the speaker is trying to say, what the speaker believes they are saying, and/or what the listener thinks the speaker is saying.

When there is a discrepancy in any one of these levels, communication will be unclear. These inconsistencies can lead to frustration, anger, and ultimately a breakdown of communication all together.

Characteristics of a Good Listener

It's important to learn how to be an active listener to engage in effective communication.

- Engage with the speaker and be fully committed to listening.
- It's important to be physically and mentally ready to listen. This may mean you need to sit down, finish work, and focus on the speaker.
- Don't interrupt; wait for the speaker to complete their message before expressing your own idea, perspective, or feelings.
- Be interested and show it by hand gestures, nodding, eye contact, etc.
- Look for the main idea(s) they are communicating.
- Watch for how they feel about what they are saying.
- Notice their non-verbal language. Are they using hand gestures? Are they nervous and looking around?

Phrases you can use to lead-in:

- "I'm picking up that..."
- "As I understand, you felt..."
- "Sort of feeling that..."
- "Are you saying...?"
- "I'm kind of feeling like..."
- "If I'm hearing you correctly..."
- "You appear to be feeling..."
- "So, as you see it..."



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