

Active Listening Techniques

Portions excerpted from Leader Effectiveness Training...by Dr. Thomas Gordon

Types	Purpose	Possible Responses
<i>Acknowledging</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ To convey that you are interested and listening◆ To encourage the person to continue talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "I get it."◆ "I understand."◆ "That's a good point."
<i>Clarifying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ To get at additional facts◆ To help the person explore all sides of a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "Tell me more about"◆ "I'm not sure I understand.."◆ "Do you mean this?"◆ "Is this the problem as you see it now?"
<i>Paraphrasing: repeat in your own words what you have heard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ To check out meaning and interpretation with the other person◆ To show you are listening and you understand what the other has said	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "Tell me if I'm wrong, what I hear you saying is....."◆ "As I understand it, you"◆ "Is this what you have decided to do ... and the reasons are...."
<i>Summarizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ To bring all the discussion into focus in terms of a summary◆ To review what ground has been covered◆ To serve as a spring board to discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "These seem to be the key ideas."◆ "If I understand what you're saying, you feel that...."
<i>Cultivate Curiosity by Inquiring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ To open up the conversation◆ To let the person know that you care and have room to listen◆ To decrease defensiveness◆ To create the possibility of problem-solving together rather than taking positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "Tell me more about..."◆ "How did that impact you?"◆ "What is your take on it?"

Road Blocks to Active Listening

ORDERING, DIRECTING, COMMANDING

You must do this.
I expect you to do this.
Stop it.
Go apologize to her.

WARNING, ADMONISHING, THREATENING

You had better do this, or else...
If you don't do this, then...
You better not try that.
I warn you.

MORALIZING, PREACHING, IMPLORING

You should...
You ought to...
It is your responsibility...
It is your duty...
I wish you would...

ADVISING, GIVING SUGGESTIONS, OR SOLUTIONS

I think you should...
Let me suggest...
It would be best for you if you...
The best solution is...

PERSUADING WITH LOGIC, LECTURING, ARGUING

Do you realize that...?
The facts are in favor of...
Here is the right way.
Experience tells us that...

INTERRUPTING

LETTING THE SPEAKER'S EMOTIONS TRIGGER YOUR OWN

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

You're not going to go are you?
I see what's coming.
It's all going to be ruined.

JUDGING, CRITICIZING, DISAGREEING, BLAMING

You are wrong.
That is stupid.
Here is the right way.
Experience tells us that...
You didn't do it just right

PRAISING, AGREEING, EVALUATING POSITIVELY

You should have very good judgment.
You are an intelligent person.
You have so much potential.
You have made quite a bit of progress.

NAME-CALLING, RIDICULING, SHAMING

You are a sloppy worker.
You never get it right.
I always have to double-check you work.
You really goofed on this one!

INTERPRETING, ANALYZING, DIAGNOSING

You're saying this because you're angry.
You are jealous.
What you really need is...
You have problems with authority.

REASSURING, SYMPATHIZING, CONSOLING, SUPPORTING

You'll feel different tomorrow.
Things will get better.
It's not that bad.
Behind every cloud there is a silver lining.

PROBING, QUESTIONING, INTERROGATING

Why did you do that?
How long have you felt that way?
Who have you consulted on this?
When did you first become aware of that?

DISTRACTING, DIVERTING, KIDDING

Think about the positive side.
Let's go for lunch and forget about it.
You think you've got problems!
That reminds me of the time when...

