

# Learning to Listen Effectively

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Listening well is a very important skill. It helps us build better relationships, talk better with others, and understand people more. When we really listen to someone, we show them that we care about what they think and feel. This builds trust and makes our connections stronger.

Here are five ways to become a better listener:

**1. Pay Close Attention** - To listen well, you need to focus on the person talking. This means getting rid of things that might distract you. Turn off your phone, close extra tabs on your computer, and find a quiet place to talk. It's also important to look at the person when they're talking. This shows that you're interested in what they're saying. When you pay close attention, you can hear all the details of their message. It also shows the person that what they're saying matters to you.



**2. Use Body Language** - Your body language can show that you're listening. You can nod your head, smile, or frown to show you understand how they feel. Leaning forward a bit can also show you're interested. You can also use small words like "Yes," "Uh-huh," or "I see" to show you're listening. These actions tell the person that you're not just hearing their words, but you're also feeling what they're saying.

**3. Don't Interrupt** - When you interrupt someone, it stops their train of thought. It's rude and makes people feel like you don't care about what they're saying. It also makes it seem like you think your ideas are more important than theirs. If you interrupt, you might miss important parts of their message. Let the person finish talking before you respond. Being patient is a big part of being a good listener. If you really need to interrupt to understand something better, do it politely. You could say, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but could you explain what you meant when you said...?" This shows that you're interrupting to understand better, not to dismiss their ideas.

**4. Reflect on What They Say** - Reflecting means repeating back what the person said in your own words. This helps make sure you understood them correctly. It also shows that you're really trying to get what they're saying. You could say something like, "So, what I think you're saying is... Is that right?" This gives the person a chance to fix any misunderstandings. It's especially helpful when talking about feelings or complicated topics.

**5. Ask Open-Ended Questions** - Open-ended questions are questions that can't be answered with just "yes" or "no." They usually start with words like "how," "what," or "why." These questions help the person talk more about their thoughts and feelings. For example, instead of asking, "Did you like the movie?" you could ask, "What did you think about the movie?" This shows you're

interested and want to hear more. It helps you get more information and understand the person better.

Using these five ways to listen can really improve how you talk with others. Good listening isn't just about hearing words. It's about trying to truly understand the feelings and ideas behind those words. When you focus on the person talking, use good body language, avoid interrupting, reflect on what they say, and ask open-ended questions, you become a better and more caring listener. This helps make your relationships stronger and creates a kinder world around you. Remember, being a good listener is something you can always get better at with practice. By using these tips, you can have better conversations and build stronger connections with people in your life. (609)