

Active Listening Techniques

Active listening is an extremely useful way to improve conflictual relationships. It requires each person to fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said by the other. These six techniques are the fundamentals of active listening, but they take some practice. If you are having difficulty communicating with someone and you are trying to improve your relationship, a counselor or mediator can be helpful in encouraging each person to actively listen to the other.

Technique	Purpose	To Do This	Example
Encouraging	To convey interest. To encourage the other person to keep talking.	Don't argue or disagree. Use Neutral words. Use varying voice intonations.	"Can you tell me more...?"
Clarifying	To help you clarify what is said. To get more information. To help the speaker see other views.	Ask questions. Restate wrong interpretations to force the speaker to explain further.	"When did this happen?"
Restating	To show you are listening and understanding. To check your meaning and interpretation.	Restate basic ideas and facts.	"So, you would like your parents to trust you more, is that right?"
Reflecting	To show you understand how the person feels. To help the person evaluate their own feelings.	Reflect the speaker's basic feelings.	"You seem very upset."
Summarizing	To review progress. To pull together important ideas and facts. To establish a basis for further discussion.	Restate major ideas expressed – including feelings.	"These seem to be the key ideas you've expressed..."
Validating	To acknowledge the worthiness of the other person.	Acknowledge the value of their issues and feelings. Show appreciation for their efforts and actions.	"I appreciate your willingness to resolve this matter."