

# The Power of Active Listening

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# Impact of Body Language and Tone

When we communicate feelings and attitudes face-to-face:

- words we speak for 7 %
- body language accounts for 55 %
- tone of voice for 38 %

So what about phone conversations?

- tone of voice jumps to 86%
- words we speak are 14%

Source: Albert Merhabian



## ADORES

### A Mnemonic for Active Listening

**A**cknowledge

**D**ance

**O**pen-Ended Questions

**R**ecognize

**E**mootional connection

**S**ummarize to confirm



# Acknowledge and Validate

Create a neutral zone to acknowledge and validate the speaker's point of view. Validation affirms that a person has been heard and has a right to feel or believe whatever he or she feels or believes.

- Remain objective and do not judge.
- Keep an open mind.
- Say **"Yes, and . . ."** or **"Sure, how?"** rather than **"yes, but. . ."**
- Remember that the goal is to understand, not agree, advise or correct.



# Communication is Like a Dance

Communication is an interaction, with ebb and flow, each partner responding to the signals of the other. When you are actively listening:

- Resist the temptation to take control.
- Ideally, the speaker should have 80% of the speaking time. The listener should have 20%.
- Allow the speaker plenty of time to complete the message without jumping in to add your own opinions and experiences.



# Open-ended Questions

Questions help us to open up, generate dialogue, build relationships, and provide information.

- What would you do?
- Who could we ask to help?
- How will these plans effect your organization?
- What might impact the timeline of this project?
- What interests you about this project and why?



# Recognize and Encouragement

Let the speaker know you are connected and interested. These interjections will keep the conversation moving:

- mm-hmm
- I see
- And?
- Yes
- Go on
- Tell me more
- And then?



# Emotionally Connect

Empathy calls upon us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being. When we empathize, we demonstrate with respect that we understand what the speaker is experiencing through words and non-verbal cues.

- Listen for feeling words.
- Observe body language for feeling cues.
- Ask yourself, "What would I be feeling?"
- Reflect your understanding of the speaker's emotion in your tone and body language. You might nod your head, lower your voice, or rub your chin, to reflect and connect with the speaker's mood.







**You Prior To A Staff Meeting**

**You Following A Staff Meeting**



**You Prior To A Community Meeting**

**Stakeholders Prior to a Public Meeting with a Federal Agency**

# Summarize to Confirm

Paraphrasing demonstrates that you have understood the speaker. It does not require a restatement of every word, rather an overview or outline of what has been said.

- Accurately condense the content (facts) and feelings of what has been stated.
- In return, the speaker can determine whether they have been heard and understood.
- For example, *“These seem to be the main points you have covered so far...”* (facts) and: *“I hear that you are very troubled about not knowing what to expect...”* (feelings) or *“I understand that you are excited to get started. . .”* (feelings)



	Active Listening Skills	Now	New
1	I allow the speaker to express their complete thought without interrupting.	★	+
2	When someone is speaking to me, I eliminate distractions by turning off the radio or television and, putting aside work or other things that might interfere.	★	+
3	I lean forward and make eye contact with the speaker.	★	+
4	I listen for the feeling behind the speaker's message.	★	+
5	I paraphrase the speaker's message to ensure I understand what they are saying.	★	+
6	I don't "turn off" the speaker because I don't personally know or like them.	★	+
7	I express genuine interest in the other person's conversation with verbal and non-verbal cues.	★	+
8	I ask questions to clarify the speaker's message.	★	+
9	I avoid rehearsing what I want to say while others are speaking.	★	+
10	I pay attention to the speaker's energy level, posture, gestures, facial expression, tone, and pace of speech, as well as their words.	★	+

Rate these active listening skills as:  
**Now:** Skills you use  
 Or  
**New:** Skills you are developing

The best way to persuade people is with your ears - by listening to them.



Dean Rusk