

ENHANCING ACTIVE LISTENING

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ABSTRACT

Listening is something taken for granted. Of course, everyone knows how to listen! But sometimes distractions get in the way. Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person in such a way that the person feels that they have really been heard. It takes the conversation one step further into the feelings of the speaker. Active listening is not only a very learnable skill—it is also an attitude. Acceptance of a person, focus and attention is needed to truly listen. Active listening is hard work! A leader's success is determined by the ability to motivate others. One can best motivate by listening and responding to those needs. Active listening techniques establish both rapport and trust between associates. Active listening presumes: *you are important to me*. Communication involves the skills of listening and speaking. To become a good communicator, one needs to develop both these skills. Competence in listening contributes to the development of speaking skills. Active listening is one of the most important elements of communication. In active listening one learns, builds relationships and demonstrates acceptance of others, enhances the self-esteem of others, saves time and money by preventing misunderstanding. Active listening skills fuel our social, emotional and professional success, and studies prove that active listening is a skill everybody can learn. As our listening skills improve, so will our aptitude for conversation. Thus this chapter discusses active listening as one of the most important elements of communication. It also explains what active listening is, how to develop active listening skills and techniques that active listeners need.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Active Listening, Conversation, Listeners, Skill, Enhancing