

Different Levels of Listening

Cosmetic Listening

You are not really listening. Your mind is somewhere else, and you are pretending to be interested.

Conversational Listening

You are engaged in the conversation: listening, talking, thinking, talking, thinking etc.

Active Listening

You are very focused on what the other person is saying. You are recording facts, attuned, paraphrasing.

Deep Listening

You are more focused on the other than self, aware of both the content and “music,” listening for ‘foreground’ and ‘background.’

Tips for Listening

Active Listening

- Focus on listening and processing info rather than speaking.
- Your goal is to fully understand the other.
- Mentally register and record facts and observations for later use.
- Confirm listening by sounds, gestures and expressions.
- Actively seek to understand, ask clarifying questions, offer observations or conclusions, deepen the conversation.
- Check assumptions and interpretations by paraphrasing.

Deep Listening

- Listen for content (foreground) as well as for background info: needs, concerns, agendas, intentions, hopes, experiences, boundaries, preferences, etc.
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication: Are body language and facial expressions in-sync with what is being said?
- What is not being said? Are there gaps?
- Self Manage: Notice reactions, triggers and emotions, and regulate what responses to bring in and when (EQ.)
- What is the pace, tone or “music”?
- What are you experiencing? What are your thoughts, images, ideas? Use yourself as an instrument or tool for gaining deeper understanding.