



Characteristics of Effective Listening

Ineffective

Effective

Non-Verbal Behavior

Listener looks bored, uninterested, or judgmental; avoids eye contact; displays distracting mannerisms (doodles, plays with a paper clip, etc.)

Listener maintains positive posture; avoids distracting mannerisms; keeps attention focused on speaker; maintains eye contact; nods and smiles when appropriate

Focus of Attention

Listener shifts focus of attention to himself: "When something like that happened to me, I . . ."

Listener keeps focus of her comments on the speaker: "When that happened what did you do?"

Acceptance

Listener fails to accept speaker's ideas and feelings: "I think it would have been better to . . ."

Listener accepts ideas and feelings: "That's an interesting idea; can you say more about it?"

Empathy

Listener fails to empathize: "I don't see why you felt that . . ."

Listener empathizes: "So when that happened, you felt angry."

Probing

Listener fails to probe into an area, to follow up on an idea or feeling

Listener probes in a helpful way (but does not cross examine): "Could you tell me more about that? Why did you feel that way? Listener follows up: "A few minutes ago you said that . . ."

Paraphrasing

Listener fails to check the accuracy of communication by restating in his own words important statements made by the speaker

Listener paraphrases to guarantee that she has understood correctly and to assure speaker that this is so

Summarizing

Listener fails to summarize

Listener summarizes the progress of the conversation from time to time

Advice

Listener narrows the range of alternatives by suggesting one "correct" course of action

Listener broadens the range of ideas by suggesting (or asking the speaker for) a number of alternatives

* William H. Bergquist and Steven R. Phillips, *A Handbook for Faculty Development*, Volume 2. Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, 1977, p. 207.