

Be a Good Listener

Listening is one of the primary ways to show you care about another person. Relationships suffer from lack of listening. The following tips will improve your listening skills.

1. Make eye contact with and pay attention to the person who is speaking. Don't look at your cell phone, TV, or anything else.
2. Take an interest in what the person is saying, instead of just waiting for him / her to finish so you can get your two cents in.
3. You can show your sincere interest by asking questions like; "What was that like?"; "What else happened?"; or comments like; "That's great!" Or "That's exciting.", or "I'm sorry that happened."
4. Avoid building up an agenda in your mind while you're listening, of what you're going to tell the other person to "fix" the situation he / she is telling you about. Try to *understand* feelings and what's really happening in the other person's world. This is called empathizing.
5. Also avoid one-upmanship. That is the habit of telling someone one of your experiences to "top" whatever he / she just told you. This kind of competitive conversation usually keeps people at a distance from each other.
6. Don't criticize or evaluate what's being said, just try to *understand*.
7. And oh, yes . . . please don't interrupt.

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*"Listening, real listening is what most people fail to do . . .
listening is done not only with the ears but with all our being.
It is compassion and a tolerance that another may
say something you don't want to hear . . .
real listening is a gift and a duty in love
that you give to another that tells them
they are cherished and of worth."*

- Paul Tillich