

## ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

1. Ask questions that cannot be answered with yes, no, or one word.
2. Nod if you understand or ask for clarification if you do not.
3. Use appropriate eye contact.
4. Do not cross your arms or legs or lean back. These are all non-verbal turnoffs.
5. Don't stand or sit too close. This often interprets as a violation of personal space and makes the other person uncomfortable.
6. Lean slightly forward when sitting, clasp hands and let them rest in your lap. This translates as interested.
7. If standing, face the person and let your arms rest at your side. This translates as openness.
8. Touch your face with your hand from time to time. This translates as thoughtful and contemplative.
9. Facial expression and tone of voice are very important in communication. IT IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT YOU SAY AS HOW YOU SAY IT.
10. Be honest and sincere.

## TOP TEN LISTENING SKILLS

1. **STOP TALKING!**  
You cannot listen if you are talking. Polonious (Hamlet) said, "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."
2. **PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE.**  
Help him/her feel that she/he is free to talk. This is often called a permissive environment.
3. **SHOW THE OTHER PERSON THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN.**  
Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while he/she talks. Listen to understand, rather than reply.
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.**  
Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?
5. **EMPATHIZE WITH HER/HIM.**  
Try to put yourself in his/her place to see his/her point of view.
6. **BE PATIENT.**  
Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don't start for the door or walk away.
7. **HOLD YOUR TEMPER.**  
An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words.
8. **GO EASY ON ARGUMENTS AND CRITICISMS.**  
This puts him/her on the defensive. She/he may clam up or get angry. Do not argue: even if you win, you lose.
9. **ASK QUESTIONS.**  
This encourages her/him and helps the conversation develop.
10. **STOP TALKING!**  
This is first and last, because all listening communication depends upon it. You CANNOT do a good listening job while you are talking. Nature gave us two ears, but only one tongue. This is a reminder to listen more and talk less.