

## **Activity for Lesson 12: Becoming an Active Listener**

**Time: 30 minutes**

### **Materials needed:**

- Handout of active listening helpers
- Flip chart or board to write on

### **Directions:**

1. Facilitator will ask students to brainstorm the behaviors that let them know that someone is not really listening to them (either large or small groups with large report out.) The list should include at the least: lack of eye contact, interrupting, responses such “yeah” over and over, doing something else while they’re supposed to be listening, inserting their own opinion. Make a list of these ideas.
2. Facilitator then asks the group, “**What is the difference between hearing and listening?**” After a brief discussion, facilitator summarizes that most people want what they have said to be understood by the listener.
3. Facilitator introduces the idea that to be a truly good listener, you have to understand as clearly as possible what the other person is saying. To do this you must set aside your own values, ideas and experiences while you listen. It is very helpful to make sure you really understand what you’re hearing by feeding back what you hear to the speaker. You can do this by paraphrasing what you hear (putting it in your own words) using some of the phrases on this list. When you do this, the speaker is not interrupted by your opinions or emotional reaction and has a chance to talk through the situation him/herself.
4. Facilitator introduces the list of phrases and steps included here which help students practice active listening.
5. Facilitator points out that these phrases may feel artificial at first. Students are encouraged to practice using them, particularly when serious topics are being discussed.
6. Pass out list of helpful phrases. Ask students to think of phrases that might feel more natural to them, as long as the phrases aid the active listening process. For example, “ I hear you saying. . .” might become “Let me check out what you just said. . .” or “Let me make sure I got you. . .”

7. In pairs students practice using these phrases in the following situations. After each statement the speaker makes, the listener must use one of the helpful phrases.
  - Mary tells her friend Martha that she's never going to speak to her mother again.
  - Joe tells Cody that he really wants to punch David for talking to his girl friend.
  - Sam tells Christina that he's not going to math anymore because he'll just flunk the class anyway.
  - Amanda tells Susana that she's going to quit soccer because she's no good.
  
8. Ask student the following questions after the role play:
  - How did the speaker feel when she/he got new response?
  - How was it different from the more usual conversation where the listener responds with her opinion or ideas about the situation?
  - How did the conversation continue? Did the speaker find it easier to express his/her feelings?
  - Did the conversation lead to a satisfying end? Why or why not?