



HOW TO LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

1. Use good attending skills (look at the person, turn your body towards the person and pay attention to where you are both situated in the space).
2. Listen closely to what the person is saying and how he/she is saying it.
3. Watch for nonverbal clues to feelings.
4. Remember the content (what the person is talking about) and the feelings (how they feel about what they are talking about).
5. Reply! Use words that describe the content and feelings in what you are hearing. Respond to all you hear, but nothing more (there will be time for that later). Give lots of attention to the person's feelings.
6. Keep listening. If you want to help, give all your attention to the other person.

HOW TO LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

1. To begin a relationship of trust and caring.
2. To help other persons understand themselves better and get more closely in touch with their feelings and attitudes.
3. When you find it hard to understand what another person is saying, or don't know what they mean by what they say.
4. To learn more about a person, especially feelings or ideas.
5. When your ideas and the ideas of the other person are different. Empathetic listening will help you fully understand their views.
6. To fill time when you are not sure what other kind of communication style to use.

HOW TO LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

1. When the other person is seeking information only, or needs immediate action.
2. When the other person is inappropriate (abusive, seductive, aggressive).
3. When the other person talks all the time in order to push you around or in order to avoid talking about something important that should be discussed.
4. When the other person is not in touch with reality, is suicidal, intoxicated, or depressed.
5. When empathic listening no longer produces new information (feelings or content) from the other person.



WHY EMPATHIC LISTENING WORKS

1. ***The other person sets the pace.*** You let them take the lead in the conversation. You don't push them faster than they want to go. This builds trust.
2. ***The other person is completely free to be natural.*** That's a rare opportunity. The other person will probably take advantage of it by relaxing and behaving in the ways that are most real and honest. When you show that you can be trusted, other persons are free to tell you about their hurts, their secrets and their ambitions. The result - you can really know them.
3. ***The other person gets more self-understanding.*** In a mirror, you can see things about your physical self that cannot otherwise be seen. In the same way, empathic listening serves as a mirror in which persons can see their behaviours and attitudes. This allows them to decide whether or not they like themselves the way they are, or if they want to change.
4. ***To empathically listen is to give something valuable.*** Empathic listening is hard work and the other person knows it. When you listen with empathy, you prove to the other person that you care.
5. ***It keeps you out of trouble.*** While you are engaged in empathic listening, you will not do anything that is pushing, painful or hurtful to the other person.
6. ***Empathic listening clarifies and reduces confusion.***
7. ***Empathic listening creates a relaxed, trusting atmosphere and reduces threat.***
8. ***Empathic listening encourages "connected" communication.***

Source: Peavy, 1977 P.O.P.S. Polishing Our People Skills. Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center, Portland, Oregon, 1986.

