

Ten Listening Techniques That Reduce Conflict

Most people define communication as “I talk and you listen!” Unfortunately, this perspective does not often improve our relationships, especially in difficult or volatile situations. We prefer the **90-10 rule**: I listen 90% of the time, and I speak 10% of the time...and when you are speaking, I will try to focus on what you are saying. Listening is both an art and a science, and too few of us practice world class listening skills.

Whether at work or at home, it makes sense for all of us to improve how we listen; that includes even listening to and seeing things that are not said directly, such as non-verbal communication (e.g., tone of voice, body language, etc.).

Here are **10 techniques** that can help to reduce conflicts and anger with friends, loved ones and those difficult people at work:

1. Focus on **what** is said, not **how** it is said.
2. Ask yourself: “Is there any truth to what I am hearing?”
3. Do not formulate a response right away; just listen.
4. Clarify and reflect what you are hearing.
5. Don’t respond to high intensity, emotional words.
6. Appreciate the person’s uniqueness—positive and negative.
7. Monitor your non-verbal “leakage”.
8. Recognize emerging needs and interests of the other person.
9. Don’t interrupt...no matter how angry you feel.
10. Excuse yourself for “time-out” if emotions have escalated.

Stop-Think-Act

For further assistance our coaches and counselors are available to speak with you privately, confidentially, and at no charge as part of the [Guard Your Buddy](#) program. We can be reached 24/7 at 855 HELP GYB (855-435-7492).

@copyright, Sobel & Raciti Associates, Inc., 2011