

Listen up

You may have heard that effective communication is critical to building and maintaining good personal and professional relationships. This is very important since most of us spend 70% of our day communicating, and 45% of that time is spent listening. A great way to build better relationships with others is to improve our listening skills. Generally, there are 3 levels of listening that have different types of responses. A person who listens at Level 1 listens for how to apply what the other person is saying. A Level 2 listener responds with respect to the *thought* process of the other person. The most effective listening level is Level 3. At this level, the listener reflects the *feelings* behind the words of the other person.

Here are 2 examples with 3 different responses. As you read think about which sounds more like your typical response?

Example #1:

- "I am planning to take a trip to Europe next summer. I have been saving up for a long time and I can't wait to go."

Response

Level 1

- I remember when I traveled to Europe. I had a lot of fun. I really liked Rome and Paris.

Level 2

- That's great. What airline are you taking? What's your itinerary? Make sure your passport is up to date.

Level 3

- It sounds like you are very excited about this trip and really looking forward to going.

Example #2:

- I didn't get the job. I had a great interview and I thought they really liked me. I don't know what happened.

Response

Level 1

- That's a bummer. Maybe you didn't dress appropriately. I know the last time I didn't get a job that I wanted I thought it might have been because I wasn't wearing the right suit.

Level 2

- Sorry to hear that. Did you mention your experience working in that industry? Maybe you

could call them to find out why you didn't get the job.

Level 3

- It is disappointing to not get the result you expected after so much preparation for the interview. It also sounds like you may be a little bit confused about why you didn't get the job.

Over the next few weeks, try listening and responding at level 3 with the people who are most important to you in your life. Notice any changes in the conversation or even in the relationship.

Keywords: Communication, Relationships, Listening, Response

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