

# ACTIVE LISTENING

## *The Basics*

1. **Give 100% external and internal attention to the other person.** Concentrate on what is being said and minimize potential distractions. Be intentionally present.
2. **Choose the tone and words wisely.** How well one listens is transmitted by both verbal output and body language. These two must be in alignment for congruence to occur.
3. **Let the other party know what is being heard.** Consistently share key points and crucial information. Additionally, use paraphrasing and check for understanding.
4. **Refrain from judging the content or the person delivering the message.** Wait until all the knowledge is shared to reach a conclusion.
5. **Search for the core meaning of the message being conveyed.** Do not get stuck on the delivery of the content, which can be misleading and clouded by an array of emotions.
6. **Find an effective way to organize and retain the information.** Take notes, if needed, or appropriately stop the other person to summarize what has been said. Waiting too long may be derailing and lead to hearing an incorrect or equivocal message.
7. **Accepting what is being said does not mean agreeing with the other person.** Respect all opinions and listen with the intention to understand each party's position. Approaching communication in this way opens many doors to positive outcomes and long-lasting, productive relationships.

## *The Process*

- STEP 1. Receive.** Be open to the information being sent from the speaker. Absorb and ask clarifying questions. Refrain from responding and giving opinions. Be still and be present.
- STEP 2. Understand.** Paraphrase and clarify. Repeat the core message(s) and any key information. Check to ensure that the information received is accurate.
- STEP 3. Respond.** Formulate conclusions based on clear understanding. Offer opinions rather than truths. Leave room for dialogue.

## *The Preparation*

### INDIVIDUAL PREPARATION

- List three concrete actions to improve on before the next time you listening actively.
  
- List three to five memory joggers that will help you implement these actions during your active listening situation.
  
- Find a listening partner you trust and who can help you practice before your next conversation. Ask for feedback on what you do well and what you could do differently.

