

## Listening Skills 101

Ask Jesus, the perfect listener and the perfect teacher, to send the Holy Spirit to help you!

Eliminate Distractions and give your full attention (communicated through nonverbals)  
Check in with yourself. Pause and tune in to listen to yourself for a moment.

Attending skills show that you're listening and understanding:

Nonverbal: Eye Contact, nodding, "hmm," smiling or mirroring their emotion

Verbal: Ask clarifying questions, summarize/paraphrase, encourage them to share more

Active listening notices subtle clues and seeks total understanding:

Words - what are they saying? (literal content, thoughts, opinions)

Nonverbals - do their facial expressions and posture match their words? (congruence)

Emotions and needs - how do they feel? what do they need?

What aren't they saying?

Meaning - what does the content of what they are sharing mean to them or for their life?

Tools for understanding and connecting

Never accept a label in place of a story

Perspective taking (put yourself in their shoes)

Are they using words in a different way than you would? What does it mean to them?

Empathy (the ability to understand the feelings of others, reach into your own experience and connect with your own emotion, & communicate that you understand their emotions)

Reflective listening skills

Reflect back to the person what they said by paraphrasing or summarizing.

"It seems that..."; "I'm getting the sense that you...";

"What I'm hearing is..."; "In other words..."; "I get the impression that...";

"You mean..."; "I wonder if..." "Sounds like you are saying..."

Reflect the other person's feelings and meanings

"Sounds like you're feeling... and for you that means...";

Ask clarifying questions

"What I think you're saying is... Is that what you meant?"

"Sorry, I'm not sure I followed that. Can you help me understand what you mean?"

"What do you mean when you say...?"

"Could you give me an example?"

"Can you tell me more about...?"

"What was that like for you? What are you feeling about that?"

"It sounds like you're pretty upset. Did something happen?"

**Resist the temptation to jump to problem-solving... *If* they're seeking it, perhaps try:**

"So how will you deal with that?"

"What do you think should be done about this situation?"

"If you had a magic wand to solve this perfectly what would you do? What do you want/need?"