

- Reflective statements are *not* the same as agreement. They are a way of demonstrating that you intend to hear and understand another's point of view.

Examples:

“Sounds like you’re upset about what happened at work.”

“You sound really confused about how to solve this problem.”

“It makes you angry when you find errors on my homework.”

“Sounds like you’re really worried about Wendy.”

“I get the feeling you’re awfully busy right now.”

SEE THESE HANDOUTS ON RELATED TOPICS

Assertiveness Skills (for Teens)

Building People Skills (for Teens)

Building Positive Teen Relationships

Dealing with Peer Pressure (for Teens)

Expressing Feelings Responsibly (for Teens)

Life Skills (for Teens)

Personal Negotiation Skills (for Teens)

Understanding Body Language (for Teens)

Workplace Skills (for Teens)

Listening Skills (for Teens)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING GOOD LISTENING SKILLS?

Listening skills help you show that you are hearing and understanding another person and are interested in what he or she has to say. Developing strong listening skills is good for relationships because:

- When you make an effort to understand what someone is thinking and feeling, it creates good feelings in the other person and makes you feel good about yourself.
- Listening carefully and checking for understanding enhances communication and results in fewer misunderstandings.
- In an emotional situation, using good listening skills has a calming effect and helps deescalate anger.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Covey, Sean. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens: The Ultimate Teenage Success Guide*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

McGraw, Jay, and McGraw, Phillip, *Life Strategies for Teens*. New York: Fireside, 2000.





WHAT ARE THE KEY LISTENING SKILLS?

1. Ask open-ended questions
2. Use summary statements
3. Use neutral questions and phrases
4. Use reflective statements

Listening Skill 1: Ask Open-Ended Questions

What they are: Open-ended questions begin with *what, why, how do, or tell me*. These questions cannot be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Their purpose is to encourage the other person to open up and elaborate on the topic.

- What they do:**
- Asking open-ended questions gets the other person involved in your conversation by giving him or her a chance to tell what he or she thinks or knows.
 - Open-ended questions are useful when the other person is silent or reluctant to go into detail.
 - These questions help you deal with negative emotions, such as anger or fear. This is because they encourage the other person to vent feelings and get them out on the table.

Examples:

“How do you feel about what she said?”

“Tell me how you put away those books so quickly.”

“What do you think about the new plants in the garden?”

Listening Skill 2: Use Summary Statements

What they are: A statement that summarizes the facts you gathered.

- What they do:**
- Summary statements help you focus on facts, not emotions.
 - They help the other person clarify his or her own thinking by hearing your summary.
 - They help eliminate confusion by focusing on the relevant facts.
 - They help you separate the important issues from the trivial.
 - They enhance the other person’s self-esteem by showing that you are listening carefully.

Examples:

“So, you’re saying you want to finish the book report before you go to dinner. Then you plan to start your chemistry assignment.”

“You’re saying that you tried your best, but it was beyond your control.”

Listening Skill 3: Use Neutral Questions and Phrases

What they are: Neutral questions and phrases get the other person to open up and elaborate on the topic you are discussing.

- What they do:**
- These questions are more focused than open-ended questions.

- They help the other person understand what you are interested in hearing more about.
- They benefit communication because they help you gain more information.
- When you ask these kinds of questions, you demonstrate to the other person that you are interested and that you are listening.

Examples:

“Give me some more reasons why we should put this off until tomorrow.”

“Tell me more about why you want to buy the new car now rather than waiting until spring.”

Listening Skill 4: Use Reflective Statements

What they are: Reflective statements involve restating, in your own words, what the other person has said. The most effective reflective statements have two components:

1. Name the feeling that the other person is conveying.
2. State the reason for the feeling.

- What they do:**
- Reflective statements help you check whether your understanding of a message is correct.
 - Reflective statements enable you to demonstrate that you are listening and that you are interested and concerned.