



A.C.T.I.V.E LISTENING

A Conflict Resolution Resource

A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening is a tool that promotes clear communication. It should be used in all communications to help reduce or prevent conflict from happening. It can be especially helpful when practiced during conflict resolution meetings.

A - Acknowledge the speaker with positive non-verbal communication such as with good body language, eye contact, head nods. If speaking by the phone, verbal acknowledgement can be used, included sounds like “mmhm.”

C - Concentrate on the content by trying to strip out the emotion you may hear. You want to fully understand the issue in order to resolve it.

T - Track the sequence by determining what series of events happened in what order. Understanding the chain of events is often useful in finding a resolution.

I - Inquiring minds; what do you really want to know? Ask questions to uncover specific details such as sequencing of events, what was said and done, who was present. Understanding facts prevents us from making assumptions.

V - Vocal and Visual cues; although you are stripping away emotion, you need to understand the level of anger or frustration by paying attention to the vocal tone and body language of the other person.

E - Emotional Control; a main component of listening is staying neutral and controlling your own emotions.

You can demonstrate A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening when you speak in a conversation by using these tactics:

1. **Repeating:** using the exact same words used by the speaker.
2. **Paraphrasing:** using similar words and similar phrase arrangement to the ones used by the speaker.
3. **Reflecting/Mirroring:** using your own words and sentence structure. Reflecting is the highest form of listening because as the listener, you have processed the information, and summarized it in your own words.