Principles and Practices for Deep Listening

**Definition of Deep Listening**

Active Listening [Deep Listening] is attending carefully to what another person says, means, intends and feels and responding in a way that lets them know they are heard and understood.

**Three Principles of Deep Listening:**

- Listen to learn
- Listen for understanding rather than agreement
- Ask powerful questions

**Benefits of Deep Listening:**

- Allows you to engage without assumptions
- Establishes trust by demonstrating that you value what others say and take them seriously
- Cultivates authentic connection with others -- the quality of your attention influences the quality of the conversation
- Helps clarify what is really going on
- Enables new possibilities to surface

**Habits of less-skilled listeners and skilled listeners:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less-skilled Listeners</th>
<th>Skilled Listeners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Immediately evaluate what is being said</td>
<td>1. Suspend judgment and listen</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Spend time rehearsing what they will say next</td>
<td>2. Focus on what the other is saying</td>
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<td>3. Try to steer the conversation towards the direction they want</td>
<td>3. Let the other person direct the conversation</td>
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<td>4. Hear everything through their own frame of reference</td>
<td>4. Try to enter the other’s frame of reference</td>
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<td>5. Only ask questions when the other seems to need help</td>
<td>5. Ask questions to satisfy their own curiosity or interests</td>
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<td>6. Disagree with other’s point of view</td>
<td>6. Seek to understand other’s perspective</td>
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<td>7. Try to take in and respond to everything</td>
<td>7. Sort for main ideas</td>
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<td>8. Allow their mind to wander to other things</td>
<td>8. Keep focused on the other and what they are saying</td>
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<td>9. Parrot back exactly what they heard</td>
<td>9. Reflect back the essence and feeling of what was said.</td>
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<td>10. Give little verbal and non-verbal response</td>
<td>10. Actively encourage speaker through verbal and non-verbal cues</td>
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Adapted from the Rockwood Leadership Institute