

Following Skills

One of the primary tasks of a listener is to stay out of the other's way so the listener can discover how the speaker views his or her situation.

The four following skills foster effective listening:

- ***Door Openers***

1. A description of the other person's body language.
2. An invitation to talk to continue talking.
3. Silence—give the other person time to decide whether to talk or decide what he or she wants to say.
4. Attending---eye contact and a posture of involvement that demonstrates your interest in and concern for the other person.

- ***Minimal encourages***

"mm-hmm" , "I see." "Go on." "Tell me more." "For instance..." "Really?"
"I hear ya." "Darn."

- ***Infrequent questions.***

- ***Attentive silence***

**Taken from "People Skills" by
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University of Maine researcher, Dr. Marisue Pickering, identifies four characteristics of empathetic listeners:

1. Desire to be other-directed, rather than to project one's own feelings and ideas onto the other.
2. Desire to be non-defensive, rather than to protect the self. When the self is being protected, it is difficult to focus on another person.
3. Desire to imagine the roles, perspectives, or experiences of the other, rather than assuming they are the same as one's own.
4. Desire to listen as a receiver, not as a critic, and desire to understand the other person rather than to achieve either agreement from or change in that person.