




In this video, I'll give a high-level view of the active listening process and the basic skills involved.

Becoming an Active Listener

Lesson 2: Active Listening



Active Listening

1. Give your full attention
2. Reflect back
3. Check that you understood correctly

Active Listening isn't just a CPL thing. It's a communication style that's taught in many, many fields, from psychology to teaching.

- On the surface, it's simple. Focus your full attention on the speaker.
- Reflect back what you heard.
- Give the speaker a chance to clarify until they have been understood.

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Set	Set your intention to understand, not judge.
Be	Be curious
Care about	Care about the speaker.
Make	Make no assumptions.
Take	Take nothing personally.
Manage	Manage your own emotional response.

Active listening starts with giving the speaker your full attention. That sounds easy, but there are many components to it:

You must set your intention to understand, not judge.

You must be curious, open to learning, and clear about the fact that there's a lot you don't know.

You must care about the speaker as a person and— really wanting to give them the experience of being heard.

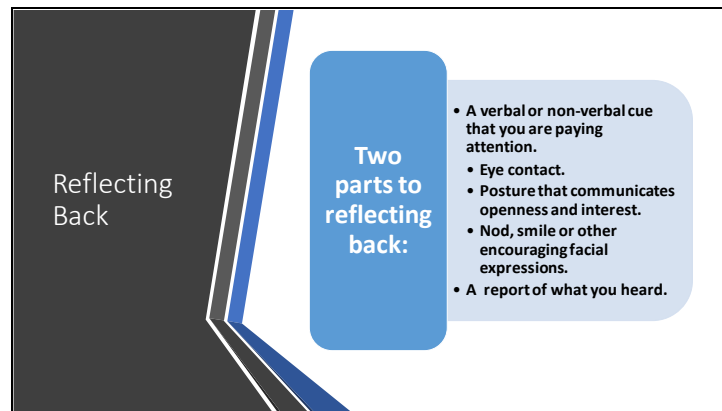
Make no assumptions. The farther apart we are in our views, the more strictly we must adhere to this point. In some cases it's best if we don't even assume we know what the speaker means when they use a word we are familiar with -- like freedom or rights or corporation.

Don't take anything personally, even if the speaker says something about you or a group you identify with. Everything they say is a comment about them and their world view. It's not about you or the people you know.

Lastly, come prepared with skills and techniques to keep our own emotions in check. You never know when a speaker will say something you find disturbing.

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The next component is Reflecting Back.

Think of this as the antidote to talking “at” someone. It’s a crucial aspect of successful conversations.

Reflecting back is simply reporting back what you have heard to make sure it’s the message the speaker intended to send.

There are two parts to reflecting back:

- You send verbal or non-verbal cue to let the speaker know you are not trying to put words in their mouth or change the subject. You can do this through:
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
 - Nodding, smiling, uh-huh, go on.
- Then, when they have finished speaking, you report what you heard.

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Checking that You Understood	Three techniques:	A cue before you reflect back	"What I'm hearing is..."
			"Sounds like you are saying..."
		A check-in question to the end your reflecting back:	"...did I get that right?"
			"...did I hear you right?"

This last bit is crucial. You need to check in with the speaker to make sure the message you received is the one they were trying to send. In other words, that they felt heard.

In many ways, it's the easiest step, but it is the one that is most often overlooked.

You can let them know ahead of time that you are reflecting back so they can correct you if you're wrong.

"What I'm hearing is..."

"Sounds like you are saying..."

Or you can simply add a check-in question to the end your reflecting back:

- Did I get that right?
- Did I hear you right?
- Did I get it all?