

# ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<b>Paraphrase</b>	One-sentence summary of your understanding of what the person has said.	<i>“So, you’re saying that the uncertainty of who will be leading this project is creating stress for you.”</i>
<b>Confirmation Statements</b>	Single words or sentence fragments used to acknowledge you’re not only listening but also participating in the conversation.	<i>“I see,” “Sure,” “I understand,” or “Thank you”</i>
<b>Open-ended Questions</b>	Phrase question to encourage person to do more talking and open up – not simply respond with “yes” or “no”.	<i>“What changes would you like to see?”</i>
<b>Closed-ended Questions</b>	Phrased so that specific or limited information is given in response.	<i>“How long do you expect the process to take?”</i>
<b>Absorbing Criticism</b>	Handling criticism so that you do not become defensive, angry or get your feelings hurt when you are the target of the criticism or negative feedback.	<i>“I’m eager to help you. Tell me what will work best to move forward on this issue.”</i>
<b>Realigning</b>	Redirect the conversation with the person gets off track.	<i>“Given how important this is to your organization, what can you tell me about your plans to reorganize this function?”</i>
<b>Silence</b>	Allow 10-15 seconds for the person to gather his/her thoughts.	
<b>Third Party Questions</b>	Questions that help a person see a difficult problem or situation in another light by getting them to see it from a third party’s point of view.	<i>“From the point of view of the Compliance Officer, what might be the biggest challenges here?”</i>
<b>What-if Questions</b>	Statements that help the person think about consequences of the choices they make.	<i>“What if this process can actually be completed within 30 days? How will this impact your organization?”</i>

## MORE QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<b>Funnel Questions</b>	Begin with general questions, and then drill down to a more specific point in each. Usually, this will involve asking for more and more detail at each level. Also helps gain interest or increase confidence of the person you're speaking with.	In sequence: <i>"Have you used the Call Center?"</i> <i>"Did they solve your problem?"</i> <i>What was the attitude of the person who took your call?"</i>
<b>Probing Questions</b>	Another strategy for finding our more detail. Sometimes it's as simple as asking the person for an example to help you understand a statement they've made. Other times it may be to determine if there is proof for what has been said.	<i>"What exactly do you mean by fast-track?"</i> Or <i>"Who exactly wanted this report?"</i>
<b>Leading Questions</b>	Leading questions try to lead the person to your way of thinking. You can lead with an assumption, phrase the question so that the "easiest" answer is "yes" or give people a choice between two options that you'd be happy with.	<i>"Option Two is better, isn't it?"</i> <i>"Would you like me to go ahead with Option 2?"</i> <i>"Shall we all approve Option 2"</i> <i>"Which would you prefer....A or B?"</i>
<b>Rhetorical Questions</b>	This type of question is effective in engaging the listener so they're drawn into agreeing rather than feeling that they're being "told" something. These are statements phrased in question form. They can be even more powerful if you use a string of them.	<i>"Isn't that a great display? Doesn't it use space really well? Wouldn't you love to have a display like that for our products?"</i>
<b>The 5 Why's</b>	A simple but powerful technique for getting to the root of a problem.  Start with the problem/symptom.  Then ask "Why?" five times to get to the root of the problem.	Problem: My car will not start. <i>"Why?"</i> The battery is dead. <i>"Why?"</i> The alternator is not functioning. <i>"Why?"</i> The alternator has broken. <i>"Why?"</i> The alternator belt is worn out and has never been replaced. <i>"Why?"</i> I don't maintain records of when parts need to be replaced.