

Pocket Reference: **Active Listening Skills Enhance your Parental Communications**

Practice Your Active Listening Skills

1. Listen to what talker is saying and take notes.
2. When the talker is done speaking (5 minute limit), tell the talker what they said in your own words, without adding your point of view, without responding to, without judgment criticism, or body language.
3. Ask the talker if you "got it"
4. If the talker says "yes" proceed to next step by asking the talker is there more? Continue steps 1 through 4 until the talker says that "there is no more".
5. If the talker says that you "didn't quite get it", or that "you missed a part or all of it", ask the talker to tell you what you missed. Then repeat steps 1 through 3.
6. After steps 1 through 5 are completed and the talker has nothing more to add, the next step is to validate the talker's feelings. Validating feelings is a way to tell the talker how their feelings make sense to you, or in other words how you are able to understand them, by putting yourself in their shoes. This step takes practice, but is probably the most important of all the listening steps.
7. Switch roles and repeat steps 1 through 6.

A few tips for success:

1. If your schedule allows, practice this exercise with your partner on a daily basis for thirty minutes.
2. If possible do this exercise the same time every day (evening when the kids are down is preferred by many).
3. Start off having the speakers only talk about something neutral. It is easy listening to someone talk about their day rather than hearing how angry and disappointed they are with you.
4. Once both parties have mastered the technique, it is acceptable to talk about conflict with each other.

How to Practice Active Listening <http://fatherhood.about.com/od/familycommunication/p/How-To-Practice-Active-Listening-With-Your-Children.htm>

Everybody Loves Raymond <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VOubVB4CTU>

You Know What I Mean? Giving Directions (for parents of toddlers and pre-schoolers)

http://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/videos/video_direct_vid.html