

10 Listening Techniques That Help Reduce Conflict

Most people define communication as: *“I talk, and you listen!”* Unfortunately, this perspective does not often improve interpersonal relations, especially in difficult or volatile situations. A better option is the 90-10 Rule: *“I listen 90% of the time, and I speak 10% of the time...and when you are speaking, I will try to focus on what you are saying.”* Listening is both an art and a science, and too few of us practice world-class listening skills.

Whether at work or at home, it makes sense for all of us to improve how we listen; that even includes taking note of non-verbal communications such as tone of voice, body language, etc.

These 10 techniques can help reduce conflicts with friends, loved ones and difficult customers at work. Give them a try:

1. Focus on **what** is said, not **how** it is said
2. Ask yourself: “Is there any truth to what I am hearing?”
3. Do not formulate a response right away...just listen
4. Clarify and reflect what you are hearing
5. Don’t respond to high intensity, emotional words
6. Appreciate the person’s uniqueness—positive and negative
7. Monitor your non-verbal “leakage”
8. Recognize emerging needs and interests of the *other person*
9. Don’t interrupt...no matter how angry you feel
10. Excuse yourself for “time-out” if emotions have escalated

Stop... Think... Then Act.

New Directions is here for you.

We’re available to support you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.