

## **Active Listening**

For: Communication Training

Duration: 15 minutes

Purpose: This exercise touches on conflict resolution with the idea that many conflicts arise because team members don't really listen. It shows the importance of listening to verbal communication, but also non-verbal communication. They can discuss why they tuned you out, and what you could have done to keep them tuned in.

Supplies: Paper and pens for everyone, one script for every two students with a random storyline (document found below instructions) interspersed within the boring text.

### Instructions:

1. Split your students into pairs, Student #1 and Student #2. Give Student #1 the script. Tell them they're supposed to be working on their reading skills so they will listen normally (instead of paying extra attention).
2. The document will be filled with mind-numbing but coherent jargon-filled speech that talks vaguely about legal policies.
3. Sprinkled in the document are sentences which say something else entirely.
  - a. These sentences will contain information that Student #2 will be quizzed on afterwards.
4. Student #1 will read it in monotone and very quickly.
  - a. The goal is to get Student #2 to tune them out. They will not over-emphasize the "real" sentences.
5. When the students are finished, have them write down what they thought they talked about.
6. Give them the questionnaire about the storyline and see how well they do.
7. Then REPEAT exercise but this time let the students know that they should practice active listening in order to do better on the questionnaire at the end. Explain that student #1 should be actively listening, but now Student #2 should be helping them to better actively listen (emphasizing and maybe even reiterating the "real" sentences).
8. Give mini lesson on what active listening is
  - a. Paraphrasing
  - b. Questioning
  - c. Clarifying
  - c. Summarizing

## 9. Debrief

Once the students are finished, ask students how they may have improved on listening and getting correct answers on the questionnaire.

- Restate how important active listening is when serving patrons.
- If you don't listen well enough and make sure you understand their needs, then you won't be able to help them to your best ability. There might be a lot of "distractions" (like the weird legal document) when talking to patrons (i.e. if they're frustrated, they might say a lot of negative things).
- If you're just trying to actively listen and are looking to question for clarification, it should help you retain the information better.
- People appreciate being fully listened to and understood, regardless if you are able to solve their problem.

## Instructions for Student #1

Please read this in a monotone voice and very quickly. You are trying to get Student #2 to tune you out. Don't over-emphasize the highlighted sentences.

### Active Listening Paragraph A:

Modifications, and/or as part of itself to the terms of that problem, seek an amicable solution for all parties, and the section is intended or shall be deemed a waiver of future enforcement of that Derived Work may be published from time to time. **My trip to Norwich, New York was not that great.** Each new version of the license terms in this section. Choosing This License Agreement along with the case (e.g., if a third party's intellectual property claims, each Contributor provides its Contributions) under the laws of the date of any of the GNU Free Documentation License. **We got thin-crust pizza, but it had olives and peppers on it which made it not as good.**

Furthermore, please note that your software works in conjunction with PHP by saying "Foo for PHP" instead of this License are fulfilled for those portions of the Program (including Contributions) may always be distributed under this Agreement by a version number of this License, shall survive. **My only sister Madeline got sick on the train, so I gave her my iPod and she watched that movie with Olaf for an hour.** If You distribute at least ONE of the Program (including its Contributions) on an "AS IS" BASIS, WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, BUT NOT LIMITATION, BEOPEN MAKES NO AND DISCLAIMS ANY REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR ANY INDIRECT, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES OR LOSSES, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE SOFTWARE IS PROVIDED UNDER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR THAT THE USE OR PERFORMANCE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

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### Questionnaire A:

1. What city did the author of this passage visit?
2. How many sisters does the author have?
3. What kind of pizza crust did the author eat?
4. What does the author care about in movies?

Now emphasize the highlighted sentences and go over them slowly. Pause if you feel it's needed (by looking at the non-verbal cues of Student #2) and ask Student #2 if they have any questions or if they want you to repeat/clarify anything. It's only important for them to know the highlighted information.

Active Listening Paragraph B:

I love chocolate cookie dough ice-cream from Cold Stone. Cookie dough is the greatest ice cream flavor in the world, I don't know why other flavors are out there. Sometimes I make cookies with my older sister Miranda. One time we burned the cookies, I was super sad and our mom was mad at us. But Miranda helped me feel better. She is super fun to hang out with, we also play tennis and ping pong.

Questionnaire B:

1. What kind of ice cream does the author love?
2. What type of food does the author make with his sister?
3. What activities do the two siblings play together?