

EFFECTIVE LISTENING

When it comes to mentors specifically, an effective listening approach is key; after all, mentors and mentees spend much of their relationships talking and listening to one another. Active listening is a technique in which the listener must fully concentrate in order to understand, respond and reflect back what was said in order to provide feedback.

The following techniques will allow you to take a checkpoint in your conversation to ensure you and your mentee are “on the same page” before you move forward with your conversation. You need to confirm your understanding of how the Mentee perceives their problem before you can offer a solution.

- Uses active listening.
- Demonstrates empathy.
- Picks up on all the subtle (or not-so-subtle) clues to tailor appropriate responses.
- Is nonjudgmental and has unconditional positive regard for their mentee.
- Keeps an open mind.
- Is truly and authentically interested in the development of their mentee.
- Encourages the mentee to come up with solutions themselves by asking probing questions.
- Stays focused on their mentee.
- Possesses the humility to accept that they do not know all the best ways of doing things.
- Remains present in the conversation.
- Listens and learns; does not just share their expertise.

Do's:

- ✓ Listen More than you speak
- ✓ Let your mentee finish before you respond
- ✓ Remain attentive to what's being said
- ✓ Be aware of your own biases
- ✓ Manage your own emotions
- ✓ Be attentive to ideas and problem-solving opportunities
- ✓ Give verbal and non-verbal cues that you are listening
- ✓ Listen for both feelings and content

Don'ts:

- Dominate the conversation
- Interrupt
- Finish the mentee's sentences
- Jump to conclusions
- Respond with negative language
- Become argumentative
- Become impatient
- Not be open minded