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EAP News #91

Are You Listening?

Listening is the other half of communication. The first step in mastering good listening skills is to become aware of why listening is important in your life and to your relationships. The next step is simply to start doing it. Practice listening whenever you can. Here are a few rules to start the process:

1. Never interrupt when the other person is speaking. Allow the speaker to complete his or her thought.
2. Eliminate distractions – put your book down or turn off the television.
3. Maintain eye contact while the other person is speaking. Pull your chair closer and lean toward the speaker.
4. Keep your posture open – directly face your partner and leave your arms and legs uncrossed.
5. Give verbal and nonverbal responses to what the speaker is saying – “yes, I see,” nod your head, smile or frown when it’s appropriate.

Listening is more than passively remaining silent while the other person talks. It is the other half of an active collaborative process. The first level is attentive listening.

In this mode we take the position that we are genuinely interested in the other person’s point of view. We accept the fact that we have something to learn from the interaction. However, this level of listening has its limitations. Even though we are attentive, we still make assumptions about the message and we tend to fill in the gaps with whatever it is that we want to hear. At this level we don’t check to see if what we have heard is what the speaker really meant to say.

The second, and more powerful, level is **active listening**. This assumes that communication is truly

a two-way process that involves giving feedback. Active listening requires that the listener paraphrase, clarify and give feedback.

? **Paraphrasing** is the most important element of good listening. When your partner says something of interest, you should restate in your own words what you heard your partner say. Paraphrasing allows us to correct misconceptions as they occur, gives us the chance to resist obstacles to good listening, keeps both you and your partner from becoming defensive or feeling misunderstood, and helps us to remember what was said.

? **Clarifying** provides more depth to the listening process than merely paraphrasing. Your purpose in clarifying is to ask questions about what the speaker is saying in a helpful empathic way. Clarifying does not involve belittling, manipulating or coercing your partner in any way. Its purpose is to tell the speaker that you are engaged in listening and want to know more about specific points.

? **Giving feedback** involves providing your personal thoughts on what your partner has said, without succumbing to the obstacles of good listening. You calmly state your own opinions, thoughts and feelings. This gives your partner yet another chance to see if you got the message and to check out the accuracy of the communication.

Listening is a skill most of us never learned as a school subject. We assume that listening is something that comes naturally. Too often we listen for what we need to hear rather than to what the other person truly intends to say. Our inability to listen is often at the root of our interpersonal conflicts. Good relationships are characterized by good listening skills on the part of both partners. When we listen well to someone we not only show that person respect and care, but we show that we are open to the world around us.

EAP NEWSLETTER

WHEN TO ASK FOR AN ANTIBIOTIC

Antibiotics are powerful drugs that are remarkably effective at riding your body of disease-causing bacteria. In fact, they work so well that when we suffer even a mild sore throat we are apt to ask the doctor for an antibiotic. And over the years, doctors have granted our requests.

And that has created a problem, because over those years, many bacteria have developed a resistance to antibiotics. Doctors have come to realize that antibiotics should be reserved for serious bacterial infections, and not used for minor illnesses that will go away on their own in a few days. But there are some things you should get an antibiotic for.

- ? Sinus infections
- ? Strep throat
- ? Pneumonia
- ? Serious skin infections

And remember, when given a prescription; always take every last pill - even though you may be feeling better. If you don't, the strongest bacteria may stay alive to reinfect your body.

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH CALCIUM?

Ages 9 to 13:	1300mg.
Ages 13 to 24	1200mg.
Ages 24 to 50	1000mg.
Men after 50:	1200mg.
Women during & after menopause	1500mg.

A FEW GOOD CALCIUM SOURCES:

Nonfat mild or yogurt (1 cup)	300mg
Cottage cheese (1cup)	155mg.
Beans (1 cup)	90mg.
Broccoli (1 spears)	72mg.
Shrimp (canned, 3oz.)	98mg.
Orange (1 medium)	52 mg.

CIGARETTE ADDITIVES

Cigarette manufactures are not required by the government to list the ingredients on their labels. Other products that come in to intimate contact with the body (food, chewing gum, cosmetics) are. According to ASH Smoking and Health Review, the additives in cigarettes include chemicals that are not permitted to be disposed of in public landfills

Dogs Love Them; You Don't

Those pet chews made from pig ears, cow hooves and other animal parts make your best friend happy, but they could be the source of illness to you and your children.

The FDA recently issued a nationwide warning that pet chews might expose people to salmonella bacteria. While salmonella infections cause vomiting and diarrhea in healthy people, they can be life-threatening in the elderly, young children and people with weak immune systems.

The FDA is encouraging healthy people to wash their hands with soap and hot water after handling these pet chews and people in the three high-risk groups not to touch them at all.

Stepping Up

When a shopping mall put up signs that climbing stairs instead of riding the escalator or using the elevator would "do your heart good," stair climbing increased by 44%. When it was suggested that climbing the stairs could "improve your waistline," climbing stairs increased 50%

HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.