

# Active Listening Skills for Professionals

## Course Overview

Read the [Course Overview](#) .

## Effective Active Listening Skills

- [1. Preparing Your Mind to Listen Actively](#)
- [2. Active Listening Skills to Say "I'm Listening"](#)
- [3. Skills to Draw Out Thoughts and Emotions](#)
- [4. Skills to "Steer" and Ensure Understanding](#)
- [5. Exercise: Mastering Active Listening](#)

# Course Overview

---

Active listening skills are time-tested tools used by professionals in a wide range of occupations to enhance their work. Psychologists, talk show hosts, or police negotiators may use active listening skills more than any other set of skills. Though you may not be counseling someone in distress, getting a celebrity to reveal their emotions, or bargaining for hostages, the principles of active listening are the same. Active listening involves creatively utilizing a blend of discrete skills that can be brought to bear in any conversation to draw out meaning, intent, and emotions.

Active listening means you are actively thinking about the process of communication, and responding in a positive way that encourages gathering more information and creating a relationship. If you continue to look at listening as a very passive endeavor, where you just sit back, strap in, and go for the ride, you're not going to get the full benefit out of the interaction that you could.

*[Onscreen text: Gary Noesner, author: Stalling for Time - My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator]*

In this course, you'll learn skills to help you operate more effectively in your workplace. These skills include how to prepare your mind to actively listen, how to demonstrate "I'm listening," how to draw out thoughts and emotions from speakers, and how to steer conversations and ensure understanding.

# Preparing Your Mind to Listen Actively

---

## Learning Objective

*After completing this topic, you should be able to*

- *identify methods of mentally preparing to listen actively*

## 1.

Hey, Claire, do you have a minute?

*[Dave appears in the open doorway of Claire's office and knocks to get her attention.]*

Sure, Dave... What's up?

So, honestly, I am pretty upset about being passed over for that promotion. I'm the most qualified, and – there are a lot of factors at play here that are unfair, so it's – it's disappointing.

Dave, you've done great work, but the decision is made and...

Yeah, well I'm angry. And, I'm sorry for the ambush but we're going to talk about why the decision is wrong, right now.

Active listening skills are time-tested tools used by professionals in a wide range of occupations to enhance their work. Claire is in a situation where these tools could make a major difference in Dave's value as a team member going forward.

When learning active listening skills, the first thing to keep in mind is that approaching a conversation from the philosophy and principles of active listening is more important than any single thing you might say. Let's explore these principles. To start, remember to put yourself and the speaker at ease. Relax and help the speaker feel free to speak.

*[Onscreen text: Relax and help the speaker]*

Have a seat.

One good rule of thumb is to stay one notch calmer, more relaxed, and slower than the speaker. Think about starting with "I'd like to help" or...

How can I help?

...and mean it.

Next, approach the conversation with empathy.

*[Onscreen text: Approach with empathy]*

Claire made the decision to promote someone else for sound reasons and nothing will change that. Still, she genuinely attempts to see things from the other side of the desk. Empathy implies identification with and understanding of another's emotions or perspective.

Next, your mind may be all you can really control in a conversation. Don't fall victim to your own emotional reactions. A professional demeanor may be more effective than a counter-argument or defense.

*[Onscreen text: Control your mind]*

For example, Claire heard...

You don't provide any leadership so how can we do our jobs well?!

It felt like an inaccurate personal insult, but she kept control.

You feel you need more leadership?

Recognizing that not reacting defensively was the most productive course of action.

Related to empathy, hear them out and maintain positive regard. You may disagree with everything, but give them a hearing and display a sincere curiosity for how they arrived at their thoughts.

*[Onscreen text: Maintain positive regard]*

Your entire approach to who gets promoted is biased against men.

Rather than reflect the negativity back, Claire continues positive regard.

Sounds like you feel slighted by the process.

Many people would have immediately responded with a denial or counterargument. This is different. You don't concede – you simply continue to let him speak. Where possible, agree.

I agree this process puts a lot on my judgment.

...or acknowledge their point.

And you're right, we haven't fully explained all the factors in the promotion process.

Some speakers may be satisfied simply saying what they feel they must and knowing that you heard and understand.

And finally, listen for what's unsaid. Try to unlock any intent, purpose, or emotional source of the conversation. Listen for themes and key ideas or details to interpret what the speaker may not be able to frame correctly, or may not be aware of themselves.

*[Onscreen text: Listen for what's unsaid]*

Claire realizes that Dave's anger is often directed toward himself.

I'm just as good as her, but OK, six months ago I wasn't. Aren't people allowed to be human and slip up?

Do you think you've slipped up for a while?

Five minutes later...

You seem angry at yourself for your performance six months ago. I sense you don't want that tarnishing your record moving forward.

Well, it was the messiest break-up of my life. My job got pushed to the back burner for a while. I never should have let her move in with me. Today you're telling me that I'm still paying for it.

Claire was able to reveal the unsaid issue.

What could have been a train wreck of a conversation, through the approach of active listening, had positive results moving forward.

I just felt like when I was having trouble at home, I couldn't tell you. I'd come across as weak or something.

You are not weak because you're having trouble at home. I'm sorry I've been less than open about this process. If better communication helps you be more competitive for the next promotion, then let's both work on that.

A calm, controlled, empathetic listener is more likely to get accurate information, satisfy underlying needs, and understand the perspective of the speaker. Active listening is often the cheapest, yet most effective concession that you can make and the best way to process the input of others. More important than any single thing you say is approaching the conversation from the philosophy and principles of active listening.

# Active Listening Skills to Say "I'm Listening"

---

## Learning Objective

*After completing this topic, you should be able to*

- *recognize skills that demonstrate attentive listening*

## 1.

Active listening has a discrete set of skills that can be creatively tailored to a situation. The skills in this topic signal to the speaker that you are engaged and attentive, and help set the stage for drawing out the thoughts, emotions, and intent of speakers.

First, giving and demonstrating attention can be accomplished through simply facing the person openly, maintaining appropriate eye contact, and being actively curious and engaged in what the speaker is saying.

*[Onscreen text: Give and demonstrate attention]*

The worst thing a – particularly a boss – can do is, is not devote their full attention when an employee comes in with a problem or issue. You need to get into the habit of putting your phone on hold, closing your doors, stepping out from behind your desk and sitting next to the person, looking directly in their eye, and thinking of nothing else but this communication interaction that's ongoing.

*[Onscreen text: Gary Noesner, Former FBI hostage negotiator]*

If you're on the phone, some of these non-verbal signals may need to become audible "minimal encouragers," the second skill you have available.

Minimal encouragers indicate your presence, attention, and interest. These are vocal prompts such as "Uh huh," "OK," "Really?" "Oh," or a simple head nod. It may seem silly to identify basic utterances as a skill, but a generous dose of these communicates to the speaker your intention to listen and get their side of things.

*[Onscreen text: Minimal encouragers]*

And encourage them to keep talking, because we're showing them - Yes, we're following along. I'm interested in your story.

The third skill, open-ended prompts, are as simple as possible. The intention is to really say "keep going." Try to use as few words as possible, such as "What?", "When?", and "How?" You can also use "Tell me more about that," "Go on," or "I'd like to hear more about that."

*[Onscreen text: Open-ended prompts]*

By asking those kinds of questions we're eliciting more than a yes and no response, which gives us very little information. We're asking a question, and framing it in a way that people provide us more information. And that additional information allows us better to understand, not only the story of what they're trying to convey, but how they feel about it.

Finally, reflecting or mirroring focuses on you sending back the prominent emotions the speaker is feeling. You may already perform this instinctively, but it doesn't hurt to put forth a conscious effort. If the speaker is happy, you lighten your mood and smile. If the person is grief stricken, you reflect the gravity of the situation. If you're on the phone, where it's more difficult to reflect non-verbally, try labeling your reflected emotions, such as "That's great!" or "That makes me worried as well."

*[Onscreen text: Reflecting/mirroring]*

So let's look at how Tom uses these skills. He's on the phone with the head office.

*[Tom is speaking into a conference phone]*

Anything else?

Actually, there is something else I need to discuss – more of a delicate issue.

And Tom demonstrates his attention.

I'm all ears. I'm listening.

As Tom listens, he says...

Uh huh?

And throws in...

OK. Right.

...as minimal encouragers. A minute later, he feels the speaker hesitate and encourages more with...

Go on. How so?

...as open ended prompts. Finally, he reflects and mirrors the speaker's emotions.

Boy. That's discouraging. Not hopeless, but a setback.

Not just with his words, but with his tone and inflection.

Tom used demonstrating attention, minimal encouragers, open-ended prompts, and reflecting or mirroring. These skills, however simple, help bridge the emotional distance. Without them, the speaker may feel like they're reporting in from an emotionally isolated place. The difference between "I said what I had to say" and "he or she really listened" is that the listener was attentive, engaged, and emotionally reflecting what the speaker was feeling. The talk became a shared experience.

# Skills to Draw Out Thoughts and Emotions

---

## Learning Objective

*After completing this topic, you should be able to*

- *recognize skills that draw out thoughts and emotions*

## 1.

Among the active listening skills, there are some that focus on drawing out thoughts, meaning, and emotions, and potentially diminishing the speaker's barriers to fully disclosing what's on their mind.

Let's watch two colleagues meeting late, trying to decide on a new strategy with a client. Right now, the client is very demanding and gets upset any time Alan or Claire doesn't meet their expectations. Alan has fairly strong views.

*[Alan and Claire are having a conversation in a meeting room.]*

We need to ask management to drop this client. We should fire this client. You know, we're not making good money and they're unhappy with everything we do.

Claire disagrees, but explores Alan's thoughts.

They're demanding, and not paying us enough. And you believe they're the wrong client for us.

Yeah, twice this year....

Claire was paraphrasing –putting the speaker's thoughts into her words and feeding them back. You can start with "So what I'm hearing is..." or "Sounds like you're saying..." Or, simply jump in and restate the facts, such as "So quarterly revenues won't be met" or "You're interested in knowing more about mutual funds."

*[Onscreen text: Paraphrase]*

Paraphrasing is basically my favorite active listening skill. Because paraphrasing is a powerful demonstration that I've heard what you said.

*[Onscreen text: Gary Noesner, Former FBI hostage negotiator]*

Next, a skill that psychologists, talk show hosts, and police negotiators use to prompt a speaker to keep talking is to repeat back the last three or four words the speaker just said. If you need to, add a question mark. When used correctly, it communicates to the speaker "go on, keep talking." Let's examine how Claire does this.

*[Onscreen text: Repeat back]*

I've tried building relationships on the client side and there's no talking to them.

*[Claire and Alan are conversing in a meeting room.]*

No talking to them.

You've tried, I've tried, and frankly I don't even know who's in charge over there. And that e-mail – you saw it – the guy writes back, like, "I'm not involved, please don't bother me, you're a loser."

You're a loser?

Yeah, you saw it, he said in so many words "you're a loser."



You're a loser.

Yeah! Read that e-mail again.

Obviously, you don't want to overuse this, but try it in real life and you'll find it works.

Next, after the speaker feels comfortable, use effective pauses. For example, when a speaker concludes a thought and expects you to respond, say nothing. Often, a well-timed silence prompts the speaker to give a deeper, more reflective statement.

*[Onscreen text: Use effective pauses]*

We need to cut them loose, there's no pot at the end of this rainbow, no upside.

*[Alan and Claire continue their conversation in the meeting room.]*

And she simply looks at him.

You know, frankly... I think you're so into pleasing customers, you're not seeing the smart thing here. Claire, you're being played by a client that needs to be tossed in a dumpster.

By pausing, Claire was able to prompt an even more honest disclosure.

For great examples, watch a talk show interviewer. Right before the celebrity says that touching heartfelt disclosure, there is almost always a well-timed effective pause.

Finally, don't dispute the wrong and find common ground. Some of the most intense listening challenges involve conflict or disagreement. At this stage of your conversation, avoid disagreement and find areas of agreement no matter how small. Statements like "You're right to be angry based on what I'm hearing," "I can see how that logic leads to that conclusion," or even "I agree this is an important issue" can establish common ground. If a speaker says "I'm upset because snow monsters keep stealing my stapler," a great listener says "You're right to be upset if your stapler keeps disappearing." Don't dispute the other person's reality – find common ground.

*[Onscreen text: Find common ground]*

Now, Claire disagrees with Alan, but nonetheless finds common ground.

Look, I definitely see the logic in firing a client if they're too demanding. I definitely get what you're saying – I don't know who's in charge on their side.

By going through these skills, Claire better explored Alan's thinking, established herself as a willing listener, and found areas of agreement.

With these skills in hand, you can potentially draw out a speaker's thoughts, meaning, and emotions and diminish the speaker's barriers to fully disclosing what's on their mind.

# Skills to "Steer" and Ensure Understanding

---

## Learning Objective

*After completing this topic, you should be able to*

- *analyze a scenario to determine if the skills for ensuring accuracy were appropriately applied*

## 1.

Among the active listening skills, there are some that help ensure accuracy and allow the listener to begin steering a conversation in the direction they want it to go. With the following skills, the listener can also lay the foundation of persuasion or conflict resolution if that is required.

Alan and Claire are trying to decide on a new strategy with a demanding client that gets upset any time either of them doesn't meet expectations. Alan has fairly strong views.

*[Alan and Claire are seated at a conference table in a meeting room.]*

We need to ask management to drop this client. We should fire this client. We're not making good money and they're unhappy with everything we do.

Claire uses active listening skills to understand as much as possible about what Alan is thinking before suggesting a course of action.

Don't you see any follow-on business with this client?

I see follow-on work, but it's just going to be more of the same. They won't stop being a toxic client.

Ask clarifying questions. Questions such as, "Is there a better way?" or, "You believe this is a major problem?" help further your understanding.

*[Onscreen text: Clarify]*

This can actually help them clarify what point they're trying to make. And if the point they make is without basis, perhaps for the first time they're really hearing it, cause you say, "Well, you know, on the one hand you want me to do this, but you've just said something quite different from that."

*[Onscreen text: Gary Noesner, Former FBI hostage negotiator]*

Questions can also begin to steer the conversation to where you want it to go such as "You mentioned my presentation wasn't ideal, can you give me some more insight?" or "Why are you so interested in ETFs over mutual funds?" or...

You've said they're toxic for the company, but...are they toxic for you as well?

Claire begins to steer the conversation where she thinks it needs to go.

When using clarifying questions, avoid directly asking what someone wants. The answer may end the listening phase of the conversation or limit your ability to change what they want.

Next, Claire tries some emotion labeling.

You seem firmly convinced they're a toxic client. You even sound angry at them.

Yeah, I am tired of hearing them endlessly complain that we're expensive when we're not. And all the trips out there wasting my time.

Label the speaker's emotions preceded with "You sound...", "You seem...", or "I'm hearing a lot of...." Emotion labeling tends to probe the person's state of mind on how they got there.

*[Onscreen text: Label emotions]*

By acknowledging to people that you understand how they feel about something, it again lets them know you've listened and you appreciate their point of view.

When properly worded, emotion labeling also provides a fall back, such as "I didn't say you were angry, I said you sounded angry."

If they just cleaned up their own inefficiencies there's no problems, and no endless trips out of town for me to placate a bunch of jerks.

You seem really angry about all those trips.

Next, Claire uses an "I" message.

I feel like you're personally done with this client.

Yeah.... I don't want to deal with them any more.

"I" messages allow you to assert yourself without being too aggressive. "I" messages make a declarative statement in a soft way, such as "I feel discouraged when you critique my performance without considering my workload", or "I thought the new process was actually going well." It's a way to make a statement less confrontational.

*[Onscreen text: Use "I" messages]*

So instead of saying "You have personal issues with the client, not business issues," she uses an "I" message.

I feel like you have personal issues with this client, not business issues.

If listening is a gift, a good summary is the bow on top. It ensures accurate understanding and may help move the conversation to a new phase if it feels stuck. Pull key facts, ideas, and feelings together in two or three sentences and ask if you're correct.

*[Onscreen text: Summarize]*

I think a really good summary, incorporates the basic story, the issue at hand, and the feelings that surround that story.

Make sure a summary includes any feelings that are present. How a person feels about a situation may be more important than what they think about a situation.

So, let me see if I have this straight. You believe they're an endlessly complaining client and you're frustrated. You don't want to work with them anymore personally, and feel the constant trips out of town have challenged your morale.

Yep.

You're personally done with them.

Yeah, that's about it.

Through these skills, Claire discovered Alan's business recommendation to fire the client is tinged with subjectivity and emotions. She is armed with knowledge she wouldn't have discovered any other way. These active listening skills ensure accuracy, allow the listener to begin steering the conversation, and help lay the foundation of persuasion or conflict resolution if required.

# Exercise: Mastering Active Listening

---

## Learning Objective

*After completing this topic, you should be able to*

- *effectively apply active listening skills in a professional setting*

## 1. Exercise overview

Active listening involves creatively using a blend of discrete skills that can be brought to bear in any conversation to draw out meaning, intent, and emotions.

In this exercise, you'll have a chance to demonstrate that you can

- identify basic principles of active listening
- recognize skills to let someone know you're really listening
- recognize what you can do to draw out a conversation partner's thoughts, meaning, and emotions, and
- determine if skills to ensure accurate listening were appropriately applied

## 2. Exercise: Mastering Active Listening

### Question

---

Which principles should guide you as an active listener?

#### Options:

1. Decide in advance the topics you're most interested in hearing the speaker discuss
2. Put yourself and the speaker at ease
3. Don't squander active listening on routine listening tasks
4. Strive to see things from the speaker's perspective
5. Even when you disagree, give the speaker a chance by hearing them out and try to find out how the speaker has come to their opinion
6. Look to the speaker's nonverbal signals to locate where their words are coming from, emotionally
7. Maintain control over your own mind and don't react emotionally to the speaker

### Answer

---

**Option 1:** *This would not be a good principle to follow. If you've decided in advance what you're interested in hearing from the speaker, you won't be inclined to hear them out on their*

terms. Active listening requires maintaining positive regard and hearing the person out.

**Option 2:** This is a good principle. Tension is a hindrance to communication, so relax and help the speaker to relax. A good rule of thumb is to stay one notch calmer, more relaxed, and slower than the speaker.

**Option 3:** This would not be an appropriate guideline for active listening. Acting listening should be applied whenever you are in conversation. That way, you're less likely to miss important messages.

**Option 4:** This is an important principle. You show empathy by genuinely trying to see things from the speaker's perspective. And empathy builds rapport and trust, which will help you get to the emotional core of what the other person is saying.

**Option 5:** This is a correct option. You don't have to agree with what the other person is saying, but you can keep the conversation positive by focusing on how they came to their opinion. This shows positive regard and openness.

**Option 6:** Paying attention to a speaker's nonverbal signals is an important aspect of active listening. Not all that the speaker really means or feels is explicitly said, so listen for what's unsaid. That may disclose the core issue you need to address.

**Option 7:** This is a valuable principle to ensure you're listening actively. Conversations can become heated if you allow yourself to react emotionally. Instead, control your mind – it may be the only thing you can control in a conversation!

**Correct answer(s):**

2. Put yourself and the speaker at ease
4. Strive to see things from the speaker's perspective
5. Even when you disagree, give the speaker a chance by hearing them out and try to find out how the speaker has come to their opinion
6. Look to the speaker's nonverbal signals to locate where their words are coming from, emotionally
7. Maintain control over your own mind and don't react emotionally to the speaker

## Question

Match the behaviors to the active listening skills they illustrate. Not every behavior has a match.

**Options:**

- A. Jose's phone started ringing as Tom was speaking, but Jose ignored it and kept his focus on Tom
- B. Reggie was careful to note down every word of Andrew's presentation
- C. Megan's expression subtly matched Todd's emotions as he talked

- D. Oliver said "Tell me more about why you think that won't work"
- E. Iris nodded as Dana explained the difficulties she was having with one of the clients

**Targets:**

1. Use open-ended prompts
2. Reflect/mirror
3. Give and demonstrate your attention
4. Use minimal encouragers

**Answer**

*An open-ended question is a prompt to encourage the speaker to go on. It lets them know you're really interested in what they are saying.*

*Reflecting/mirroring assists in demonstrating both attention and empathy. By matching the mood, tone, and mindset of the speaker, it builds rapport and trust.*

*Giving and demonstrating your attention can often be accomplished through simply facing the person openly, maintaining appropriate eye contact, and ignoring your cellphone.*

*Minimal encouragers such as "uh huh," "OK," "Really," or even a simple head nod indicate your presence, attention, and interest.*

**Correct answer(s):**

Target 1 = Option D

Target 2 = Option C

Target 3 = Option A

Target 4 = Option E

**Question**

You are the manager of the accounts department of a waste-recycling company, and you've recently introduced some changes to working practices. For the past six years, Katie has been one of your most reliable workers, but you sense she isn't comfortable with the changes. You arrange a meeting. Katie is initially a little nervous and evasive before she announces, "There have been some changes that I don't agree with. Things have become a little unsettled."

What can you say or do to help draw out Katie's thoughts and emotions?

**Options:**

1. Repeat Katie's words "A little unsettled"
2. Ask Katie to try to set her feelings aside as she speaks
3. Use pauses or moments of silence to Katie to resume her train of thought
4. Focus on areas of common ground rather than areas of conflict
5. Quickly describe your motives for making the changes to working practices
6. Put Katie's thoughts into words and feed them back to her, saying, "So what I'm hearing is..."

## Answer

**Option 1:** This is a correct option. Repeating back the last three or four words Katie just said encourages her to "go on, keep talking."

**Option 2:** This action is unlikely to help. Active listening is about drawing out the speakers thoughts and emotions, not closing them down.

**Option 3:** This is a correct option. A well-timed silence can prompt Katie to fill the space with a deeper, more reflective statement. First, however, you must give solid verbal indications that you're listening and make her feel comfortable.

**Option 4:** This is a helpful strategy. You may sense Katie is about to criticize you, but rather than focusing on dispute, try to deliberately find areas of agreement.

**Option 5:** This is an incorrect option. Jumping in to provide your perspective or opinion is a common obstacle to putting active listening skills into practice.

**Option 6:** This is a correct option. Paraphrasing ensures that you have understood correctly and assures the speaker that you're receiving the message.

### Correct answer(s):

1. Repeat Katie's words "A little unsettled"
3. Use pauses or moments of silence to Katie to resume her train of thought
4. Focus on areas of common ground rather than areas of conflict
6. Put Katie's thoughts into words and feed them back to her, saying, "So what I'm hearing is..."

## Question

You are the owner of a design studio. Raymond, the head of graphics, meets with you to discuss Joe, an underperforming member of his team. Raymond is clearly exasperated and reports that, over the last year, Joe has displayed poor timekeeping and has missed deadlines. Raymond quietly informs you that Joe was openly dismissive when Raymond cautioned him about improving both his performance and behavior. Raymond says he is at "his wits' end" when it comes to Joe.

Match each comment you make to the active listening skill it would demonstrate.

**Options:**

- A. "You seem exasperated by Joe's behavior. You sound like you felt slighted by Joe's dismissal of your feedback."
- B. "I feel like you're tired of Joe's bad behavior, and I get the feeling you don't see a place for him on your team."
- C. "Joe's shown poor timekeeping, he's missed deadlines, and he's been insubordinate. Have I got that right?"
- D. "You say you're at your wits' end. What do you think is the next step in dealing with the problem?"

**Targets:**

- 1. Summarize
- 2. Emotion labeling
- 3. Clarification questions
- 4. "I" messages

**Answer**

*Summarizing ensures accurate understanding and may help move the conversation to a new phase if it feels stuck. Make sure the summary includes feelings.*

*Emotion labeling helps with emotional speakers by probing the person's state of mind and how they got there.*

*Clarifying questions help you grasp what was said or gain specific information. They can help steer the conversation to where you think the speaker's real issues lie.*

*Starting your comment with an "I" message allows you to assert yourself without being too aggressive.*

**Correct answer(s):**

Target 1 = Option C

Target 2 = Option A

Target 3 = Option D

Target 4 = Option B

**Case Study: Question 1 of 2**



## Scenario

---

*For your convenience, the case study is repeated with each question.*

Martina is a project manager for a data storage company. She is working hard to meet a deadline on a customized storage solution for a client when Paul, one of her key data center engineers, drops out due to illness. She would like Chad, a project manager working on a different project with a longer delivery schedule, to loan her one of his data center engineers, but his initial response has been negative. Access the learning aid [Project Manager Dispute: Active Listening Skills](#) and review Martina's conversation with Chad.

Answer the questions in order.

## Question

---

Which remarks are examples of Martina's proper use of active listening skills?

### Options:

1. "You say the answer is no. Where's the problem for you in lending an engineer out to help complete a project?"
2. "You sound resolved in this. I'm hearing real determination in your voice."
3. "Can I just stop you there? I'm not interested in poaching your people. I just need a helping hand. Two weeks at most."
4. "So you're not willing to lend an engineer. You've done it in the past, but you're not going to do it anymore."

## Answer

---

**Option 1:** *This is a good demonstration of listening skills. Specific clarifying questions help you grasp what was said or discover information. In this instance Martina learns what motivates Chad's resistance to lending an engineer.*

**Option 2:** *This is a correct option. Emotion labeling probes the person's state of mind and how they got there. By accepting Chad's emotions, Martina shows respect for his feelings on the issue, even if she doesn't accept the position he is taking.*

**Option 3:** *This isn't a good demonstration of listening skills. An "I" statement – like "I feel..." – can allow you to assert yourself without being too aggressive, but this is an interruption masquerading as an "I" statement. Interruptions can be seen as uncooperative.*

**Option 4:** *This is an incorrect option. Summarizing can help to move a conversation to a new phase, but a summary must bring in emotion. Here Martina summarizes Chad's policy, but she doesn't demonstrate empathy with his emotional perspective.*

### Correct answer(s):

1. "You say the answer is no. Where's the problem for you in lending an engineer out to help complete a project?"

2. "You sound resolved in this. I'm hearing real determination in your voice."

## Case Study: Question 2 of 2

### Scenario

*For your convenience, the case study is repeated with each question.*

Martina is a project manager for a data storage company. She is working hard to meet a deadline on a customized storage solution for a client when Paul, one of her key data center engineers, drops out due to illness. She would like Chad, a project manager working on a different project with a longer delivery schedule, to loan her one of his data center engineers, but his initial response has been negative. Access the learning aid [Project Manager Dispute: Active Listening Skills](#) and review Martina's conversation with Chad.

Answer the questions in order.

### Question

What's the most likely outcome of the conversation based on how well Martina was listening to Chad?

#### Options:

1. Chad lends Martina the hardware engineer she needs to complete the project on schedule
2. Chad maintains his unwillingness to lend an engineer to Martina to complete the project
3. Chad and Martina will meet again to try to move their conversation forward

### Answer

**Option 1:** *This is an incorrect option. Martina now recognizes the strength of feeling in Chad's position and has uncovered the experiences that are at the root of this refusal, but she has failed to move the conversation forward.*

**Option 2:** *This is a correct option. Chad can see that Martina knows why he refuses to help, but she hasn't demonstrated empathy with his emotional perspective on the issue and or given him a reason to shift his position.*

**Option 3:** *This is an incorrect option. By failing to use active listening skills correctly, Martina has missed out on an opportunity to lay the foundation of persuasion and conflict resolution that is required in this situation.*

**Correct answer(s):**

2. Chad maintains his unwillingness to lend an engineer to Martina to complete the project