

## Class Newsletter

*"Listening is an art."*

### **Different Kinds of Listeners**

- **The Commander-in-Chief:** uses orders, commands, and threats to stop people from being angry. Ultimately, they minimize feelings. "Sit down and be quiet!"
- **The Moralist:** advises the speaker by telling them what they should or shouldn't do. "You should study hard so that someday you can get a job."
- **The Know-It-All:** knows just what you should do. They try to impress others with their knowledge. "If you keep calling Jim names, he's going to keep hitting you."
- **The Judge:** decides whether or not feelings are appropriate. They try to prove themselves right and others wrong. "You're not hurt, go back outside and play."
- **The Critic:** likes being right and relies on ridicule and sarcasm to show how silly feelings are. "Oh, come now, Kevin. Your sister can't be that bad."
- **The Amateur Psychologist:** questions, analyzes, and diagnoses to set the listener straight about what their problem is. "You feel inferior to your brother, don't you?"
- **The Consoler:** treat feelings lightly to avoid getting involved. They give verbal pats on the back. "Don't worry about it. I'm sure everything will be all right."

### **How to Be a Better Listener**

"Good listening is part of a trusting relationship." We need to let others know that we accept and respect their feelings by building an environment where they can thrive. Language is not only verbal, but nonverbal and body language is a very big part of communicating with others. Lean forward and remove any physical barriers such as desks. Empathize, don't judge even if you don't feel the same as the speaker. Assure them that you are listening by giving them some verbal reassurance, but make sure to let them talk and don't interrupt or put words in their mouths. Use reflective listening to tell people you understand their feelings.

### **Reflective Listening**

Reflective listening requires that we reflect back exactly what the speaker is feeling without interpretations or analysis, but we need to make sure to paraphrase not just repeat back what they said. When the speaker doesn't use an emotion to label their feelings, repeat back what they are feeling with a label.

### **How to Implement Reflective Listening**

Use the "You feel...because..." template to help you plan your response. Example:

The speaker, "Those kids won't let me play softball with them." Start with, "You feel sad..." By labeling emotions, we can help the speaker see the situation clearly and help them articulate their feelings. Next, make sure to reflect the circumstances that lead to those feelings. "...because they're leaving you out of the game." By reflecting the circumstance, we are showing the speaker that we are listening. Make sure to be as accurate with the feeling as you possibly can. Don't underestimate the intensity of the speaker's feelings.

### **Cautions**

- Use open-ended responses because they allow people to keep exploring their feelings.
- Students may become silent after your response. Don't rush to fill the silence.
- Don't be a mind reader. Use a tone of voice that tells the speaker you've got a hunch, not a conclusion about their feelings.
- Don't ask too many questions.
- Be careful when you interpret nonverbal behavior.
- Be aware of times when your reflective listening is reinforcing a student's mistaken goal.

