

Discussion 1

I call my father every Tuesday, and this week I made a conscious effort to actively listen and engage more fully in our conversation. Normally, our chats are fairly brief, around 5 to 10 minutes, and tend to stay on the surface. This time, though, we ended up talking for over 30 minutes on a variety of topics.

I asked about his upcoming golf tournament, and he lit up as he described being the captain of his team. He even shared some candid thoughts about a teammate he finds arrogant, which was surprising since gossip isn't usually his style. While he didn't comment directly on the shift in our conversation, he did open up and share his real opinions more than usual.

The conversation felt really easy to sustain at this deeper level, and I really enjoyed connecting with him in a more meaningful way. Just starting with active listening made it easier to keep it going since the depth of conversation made it very engaging.

Discussion 2

I called my mom this week and made a deliberate effort to practice active listening throughout our conversation. We ended up talking about my abuelita, who just moved into a nursing home. As the conversation unfolded, my mom began sharing some of the tensions between her and her siblings surrounding this transition. This surprised me, because she usually reserves these more personal, emotionally charged topics for my brother.

What stood out to me was how my focus on listening (asking gentle questions, giving her space to talk, and really paying attention), seemed to create room for her to open up. For once, I didn't feel like I was just hearing about family updates secondhand. Instead, I felt included in the deeper side of what's been happening in her world. It was a little difficult to listen towards the end because our conversation floated away from the drama that was keeping me engaged.

Discussion 3

I called my brother for the first time in a while making another effort to practice active listening during our conversation. I don't talk to my brother often as we have our differences that we have not accepted yet. This conversation was different. We spent a long time (~30mins) catching up. We talked about his baby on the way, our work, made plans to get together, and much more. My brother noticed and

commented on a difference in our conversation saying, "I feel like there is another level of respect in this conversation that I want us to carry forward." This was a beautiful comment expressing the power of active listening, and something that truly touched my heart.

It was difficult to start our conversation, however. He was initially reserved to communicate (which is typical of a conversation between us) but as I asked more questions, and seemed genuinely interested, his demeanor changed exponentially and allowed our conversation to blossom. I believe this one instance of active listening is an exemplar conversation demonstrating the rich capabilities of active listening. By engaging in this conversation, we have begun to fix a relationship that was long broken - and I am truly grateful for this assignment as hopefully it will change my life.