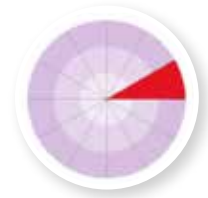


CONNECT

# Active Listening



Active listening is one of the Connect style behaviors in the Sphere of Influence 360°.

Active listening is like Listening 2.0. You make a concerted effort to understand the message your conversation partner is trying to convey and give them your full attention. While you focus on what the other person is saying, you also try to read between the lines:

- What aren't they saying?
- What nonverbal signals do you see?

In this exercise, we will focus on the last part: **nonverbal communication**.



**The most important thing  
in communication is  
hearing what isn't said.**

**- Peter Drucker**

## Exercise: Observe

In this exercise, we encourage you to pay attention to nonverbal signals. During the next 5 to 10 conversations you have, we invite you to observe people's facial expressions and focus on the gestures and movements that they make. What do you notice about their facial expressions, voice, movements, and posture? Do these non-verbal signals agree with what they are saying?

It is important that you **ONLY OBSERVE!**

### Facial expressions

Pay attention to eyebrows, eyes, tension in the face, corners of the mouth. How would you describe their facial expression (happy, doubtful, worried, surprised, etc.)?

### Eye contact

Is it easy for them to make eye contact? When do they avoid it?

### Voice

Think about the volume and speed with which they speak. What stands out about their tone and pace?

### Movements and posture

Are they sitting still or very active? Do any of their other movements stand out? Do they seem relaxed or tense? Are they sitting up straight? Are they sitting on the edge of their seat or leaning back? What else stands out (crossed arms, clenched fists, fiddling with something, etc.)?

## Example Sentences: Express what you observe



For the second part of this exercise, we encourage you to express what you see. Use this intervention wisely; applying this technique too frequently can make others feel uncomfortable. It's also very important to stick to describing what you see without offering your interpretations or conclusions.

So, indicate what you've noticed and give your conversation partner an opportunity to react. **Your only job is to listen.** Maybe what you saw didn't mean anything: people also cross their arms when they are cold or sit on the edge of their seat when they need to go to the toilet.

If there is no reason for their non-verbal signals, that's okay too. You were just checking! However, these are very often the moments when people share what's truly on their minds.

To sum it up once more: **express what you observe** without drawing conclusions or interpretations. Then, **zip it!!**

The example sentences in these speech bubbles may inspire you.



**"You started to talk a lot faster when..."**

**"That is a big sigh."**

**"I see you lift your eyebrows."**

## Evaluation:

How did your attempt to observe non-verbal signals and share them with your conversation partners work out?



1



2



3



4



5

What did you learn? What insights did you gain?

What went well? What would you repeat?

What can you do to improve your performance?

What is your next step?