



Week 1, Day 2:

The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words are persuasive.

Proverbs 16:21

Listen with Respect

A good listener recognizes how important it is to communicate to others that what they have to share is valuable. When you show respect for the ideas and thoughts of your family, friends, and coworkers, they will be more likely to respond respectfully to your own ideas. They will also be more likely to continue to communicate with you, for respect fosters growth and understanding.

Being a respectful listener also involves drawing out important thoughts and information. This can help to uncover feelings and needs that are not yet clear, and can also provide fresh ideas and possible solutions. By using statements such as, “Tell me more,” or, “That sounds important,” you let the other person know that you are fully engaged in the listening process. Summarizing can also be an important way to ensure that you have understood correctly and that everyone is on the same page. You can do this either during the conversation or if you don’t, you should certainly do it at the end. By asking questions, your respectful listening gives the other person the opportunity to fill in the gaps that you don’t know, and to explain things that are unclear to you. Through this, you can gain greater clarity and understanding and avoid confusing information and mixed messages.

Listen with Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to share and understand the experiences and feelings of another person. Empathetic listening involves listening and responding to another person in such a way that you improve your mutual understanding and trust. True empathy is the ability to fully understand and accept another person, with all their feelings, thoughts, and opinions. When someone needs empathy and understanding, it is frustrating to speak to a person who does not engage with them, or who simply offers fix-it advice.

As you seek to listen with empathy, learn to listen for what is not being said. What is in the way? What is missing? What is needed right now? What is important to the speaker?

REFLECT: Do these two traits of listening with respect and empathy characterize your relationships?

TAKE ACTION: Seek to find a relationship to apply these skills to today.