

# Analyze and Improve Your Listening Skills

Directions: Working in a pair or in a group of three, have an 8 to 10-minute conversation about your previous experiences working in groups (what kinds of groups you worked with, what you liked, what you didn't) and what questions or concerns you have about study groups. When time is up, work on the items below and on the back.

Based on the conversation you just had, check the appropriate boxes:

That was me!	Sometimes, but not today	Not me!	
			<b>The Faker:</b> All the outward signs are there: nodding, making eye contact, and giving the occasional "uh huh." However, the faker isn't concentrating on the speaker. His/her mind is elsewhere.
			<b>The Interrupter:</b> The interrupter does not allow the speaker to finish and does not ask clarifying questions or seek more information from the speaker. He/she is too anxious to speak words and shows little concern for the speaker.
			<b>The Intellectual or Logical Listener</b> This person is always trying to interpret what the speaker is saying and why. Intellectuals judge the speaker's words and try to fit them into a logic box. Rarely asks about the underlying feeling or emotion attached to a message.
			<b>It's all about Me:</b> This person uses the speaker's words only as a way to get to their talk about themselves. When the speaker says something, and frankly, it could be anything, this person steals the focus and then changes it toward his/her own opinion, story, or facts.
			<b>The Rebuttal Maker:</b> This person only listens long enough to use the speaker's words against them. At worst, this person is argumentative and wants to prove you wrong. At best, the person wants to make the speaker consider the other point of view (playing "devil's advocate").
			<b>The Advice Giver:</b> This behavior interferes with good listening because it does not allow the speaker to fully articulate his/her feeling or thoughts; it doesn't help the speaker solve their own problems; it could also belittle a speaker by minimizing their concern with a quick solution.

**Note that these are ALL listening habits that you'll want to break!!**

Reference: *The Emotional Intelligence Activity Book* by Adele B. Lynn.

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*How well did you listen? (10 to 12 minutes)*

1. Paraphrase what your partner told you. Jot down some notes.
  
2. Take turns reporting back to your partner what you recall from the conversation. "So, what I heard you say is..." Then answer the following questions on your own.
  - How well could you recall what your partner said? Explain.
  
  - How well could your partner recall what you said? Explain.
  
  - Was the conversation balanced? (each person spoke equally)
  
  - Did you allow your partner to complete their thoughts?
  
  - Regarding body language, did you...
    - make good eye contact?
    - nod to show that you followed what was said?
    - turn your body toward the person speaking?
    - tune into others' feelings?
  
  - As a preceptor, you will have the opportunity to exercise your communication skills in study groups. In what one area would you like to improve this semester? Be specific and make sure it is an attainable goal.

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