



# Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood

February 12, 2018

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## *Students Will Be Able To*

- 1. Understand what it means to seek first to understand and then to be understood (i.e. listening first, talking second; seeing things from another's point of view, etc.)*
  - 2. Explain and demonstrate the importance and benefit of genuine listening*
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## Materials

- Activity 1) Print *Listening Opinionnaire* (1 for each student)
- Activity 2) Print out and cut apart the listening skill scenarios. (one paper for entire class)
- Activity 3) Print *Walk is Someone Else's Shoes* (1 for each student)
- Activity 4) Print *Mirroring vs Mimicking* (1 for each student)
- Activity 5) Print "I" statements vs "You" statements (1 for each student)
- Activity 6) Print *Speak Up!* (1 for each student)

## Introduction

Explain to students that the goal of the activities will be to help them identify genuine listening. What are strategies that can help them be a better listener? How listening can improve various aspects of their lives, and to help them understand the importance of listening in their relationships with others – whether that means their best friend, their teacher or even their parents.

Activity 1– Listening Opinionnaire

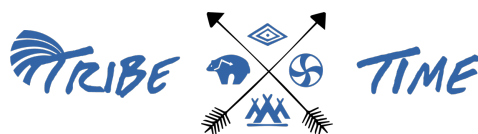
Activity 2 – Seek first to Understand... Listening Skills (act out a scenario)

Activity 3 – Genuine Listening- Walk in someone Else's Shoes Activity

Activity 4 – Mirroring vs Mimicking

Activity 5 – Then Seek to be Understood

Activity 6 – Speak Up!





# Listening Opinionnaire

## Activity 1

### Are you a good listener?

Nobody knows you like you do. When you are with others, do you try to seek first to hear and understand them? Take this opinionnaire to find out. Be honest with yourself. It is the only to learn what type of listener you are.

- True False** I communicate well with my parents. I listen to them and they listen to me.
- True False** I often space out when someone is talking about something I don't care about.
- True False** I never judge people when they are talking.
- True False** I am a genuine listener. I listen with my ears, eyes and body language.
- True False** I am always giving advice to my friends when they are talking to me.
- True False** I have selective listening...sometimes I listen intently and other times I zone out.
- True False** I express myself in honest and responsible ways.
- True False** I listen more than I talk.
- True False** My friends consider me a talker more than a listener.

### Well, Are You?

Look over your answers and decide. No one is going to see this but you, so try to be honest.

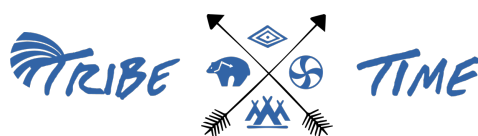
- Yep. I'm a genuine listener.
- Sure. I'm usually someone who listens.
- Nope. I'm in it for me, and being a really great listener has never been a priority.

### Is That Where You Want to Be?

How do you feel about that? Is what you put where you want to be? If so, what comes next will be reinforcement for you. If you aren't somewhere you want to be when it comes to being a listener, that's okay. The activities that come next will help you start to make some changes.



**Challenge** – If you are a talker, take a break and spend your day listening. Only talk when you have to.





# Listening Scenarios

## Activity 2

### Five poor Listening Styles...

#### Discuss

- **Spacing out**- is when someone is talking to us but we ignore them and our mind is wandering.
- **Pretend listening**- is when we pretend we are listening with “un-huh” “yeah” statements
- **Selective listening**- is when we pay attention to only the part of the conversation that interests us.
- **Word listening**--occurs when we actually pay attention to what the person is saying, but we listen to the words, not to the body language, the feelings, or the true meaning behind the words.
- **Self-centered listening**-happens when we see everything from our own point of view, instead of standing in another’s shoes, we want them to stand in ours. (judging, probing, advising)
  - **Judging** –when we make judgement about the person speaking and quit listening to what they are saying. We are too busy with our judgements.
  - **Advising** – when we are anxious to give advice drawn from our own experiences. “Well when I was your age...”
  - **Probing** - is when we try to dig up emotions before people are ready to share them. Often it feels intrusive.

### Act out a listening scenario.

Assign two students to be actors. They will be acting out listening scenarios for the rest of the class. After they **act out the first one** , lead the **class** in a **discussion** about what was done right and what could be done to make it better. Then try it again with the **second scenario**. Did it make a difference? Then do the **As a class... practice exercise**.

#### Scenario #1a

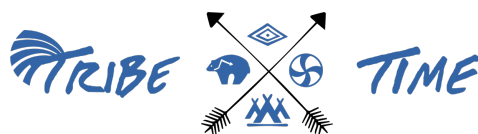
**Reader #1** Adrian was really mean to Hank at lunch today. She used to be his best friend and now she is stabbing him in the back.

**Reader #2** Wait? Who got stabbed?

#### **Discussion:**

What listening issues did you notice in this scenario? It is important to listen with your eyes, heart and ears. 7% of communication is in the words we use, 53% is body language, and 40% is the inflection or tone of our voice.

**Lets try it again...**





**Scenario #1b**

**Reader #1** (Stopping her friend and pulling her gently to the side of the room. Showing concern and making eye contact) Adrian was really mean to Hank at lunch today. She used to be his best friend and now she is stabbing him in the back.

**Reader #2**(realizing the importance by the look on her friend’s face and returning eye contact) I noticed that she was being cold to him. I wonder how we could help?

**Discussion** What is spaced out listening? What does it look like? What does it sound like?

**As a class...**

- a. See how long you can keep **eye contact** with someone while they are talking to you. It feels pretty intense at first but if you can make it a habit, it is a powerful way to communicate with someone.
- b. Try saying “ **I am listening to you.**” with an **angry** attitude, tone and body language.
  - with a **distracted** attitude, tone and body language.
  - with a **silly** attitude, tone and body language.
  - with a **judging** attitude, tone and body language.
  - with a **caring** attitude, tone and body language.

**Scenario 2a**

**Parent** Hi honey, how was school today?

**Student** Fine

**Parent** How did you do on your science test?

**Student** OK

**Parent** How was lunch today?

**Student** Good

**Parent** Do you have any plans tonight?

**Student** Nope

**Parent** Doing anything with your friends?

**Student** (with attitude) I said no!

**Parent** Do you have any homework?

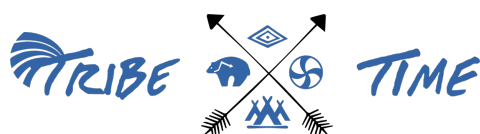
**Student** Done

**Parent** Are you hungry?

**Student** Nope

**Discussion**

What is the listening/speaking issue in this scenario? What is probing? What is self-centered listening?





### Scenario 2b

**Student** Mom, can I run up to Stokes and get some treats for school tomorrow?

**Parent** What?

**Student** Can I go to Stokes. I need some treats for a class party tomorrow.

**Parent** Where is your brother?

**Student** I don't know. He was just here a minute ago.

**Parent** find him.

**Student** Mom...I need to go to Stokes.

**Parent** No, you need to find your brother.

**Student** (with attitude) This is not fair. Why am I the babysitter the minute I walk in the door. I have a life!

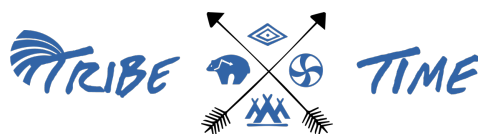
**Parent** What is with the attitude?

**Student** (stomping to his bedroom) I'm going to my room.

### **Discussion**

What is the listening/speaking issue in this scenario? What is word listening? What is pretend listening? To become a genuine listener you need to take off your shoes and stand in the other persons. You must try to see the conversation from their point of view.

**As a class.... With a partner discuss which of the five poor listening styles do I have the biggest problem with- spacing out, pretend listening, selective listening, word listening self-centered listening,( judging, probing, advising). Pick one to work on. Try to go one whole day without doing it.**





# Listening Scenario Printout

Activity 2

## Scenario #1a

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**Reader #2** Wait? Who got stabbed?

## Scenario #1b

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## Scenario 2a

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**Parent** Do you have any plans tonight?

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**Student** (with attitude) I said no!

**Parent** Do you have any homework?

**Student** Done

**Parent** Are you hungry?

**Student** Nope

## Scenario 2b

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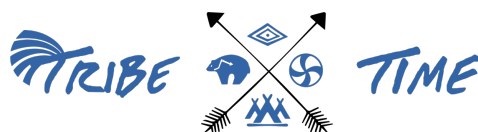
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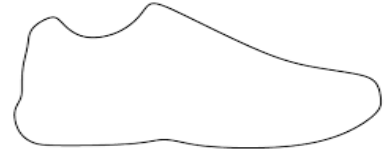
# Genuine Listening

## Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

Activity 3

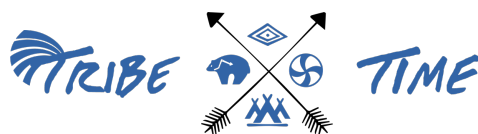
### Discuss

- Listen with your eyes, heart and ears
  - Genuine listening leads to real communication
- Walk in another person shoes...
  - Hand out **Walk in Someone Else's Shoes Activity**. (print one per student)
  - Imagine spending a day in someone else's shoes. On Shoe #1 have students write about a situation have faced, in which they really wanted someone to listen, and hear what they were saying. Ask students if they can think of a time- maybe during an argument when they got their feelings hurt, or got a bad grade, or felt left out. Write about how they felt. Only write on #1 shoe; do not answer the questions on the bottom half of the sheet
  - When you finish with shoe #1, turn in the sheet to the teacher. (teacher- give sheet to someone else.)
  - On the sheet you are given, read what your classmate has written silently to yourself. Then write what you think that person may have been feeling and how, given what you know, you would have responded. Then write this response on Shoe #2.



### Discussion

Have students return to the small groups from the previous activities, and discuss the situations described on the shoes, what they thought the person felt like, and how they would respond.





**Walk in Someone Else's Shoes- Activity 3**

To become a genuine listener, you need to take off your shoes and stand in another's. You must try to see the world as they see it and try to feel as they feel.

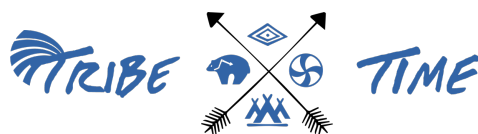
**Shoe #1** Write about a situation you have faced when you wanted someone to listen, and hear what you were saying. Think of a time during an argument when you got your feelings hurt, or maybe a time you felt left out. Write about what happened and how you felt. When you are finished, hand it in to your teacher.



**Shoe #2** On the sheet you are given, read what your classmate has written silently to yourself. Then write what you think that person may have been feeling and how, given what you know, you would have responded. Write your response



**Challenge** –People watch for a few days. See how others communicate. Are they really trying to understand? Try walking in someone else's shoes.







# Mirroring Vs Mimicking

## Activity 4

**Genuine listening** is easier when you think like a mirror. What does a mirror do? It doesn't judge. It doesn't give advice. It reflects. Mirroring is repeating back in your own words what another person is saying and feeling. No judging or giving advice.

**Model** by reading the following statement. "I feel so ugly. Nobody will ever want to be my friend."

An **advice giving listening error** might be "Well if you did your hair differently" or "I can help you out if you want to come over to my house for a makeover"

A **judging listening error** might be "Yea, you really should do something with your face and hair!"



**Mirroring** might be "it sounds like you don't feel every pretty today." Or "I can see you might be discouraged today. What's got you down?"

With a partner, try **mirroring** what they are saying and feeling. Have one person present their feelings about something important to them. Have the other person try mirroring and genuine listening.

Use these **mirroring phrases...**

- It sounds like you feel...
- ...so as I see it...
- I can see you are feeling...
- You see that...
- So what you are saying is...
- What I am hearing is...

Mirroring isn't mimicking. Mimicking is when you repeat exactly the same phrase exactly as the other person said it. Like a parrot. Mimicking is not genuine listening



Mirroring is	Mimicking is
Repeating the meaning	Repeating words
Using your own words	Using the same words
Warm and caring	Cold, indifferent, or flippant





# Mirroring Vs Mimicking

Activity 4



**Mirroring** is repeating back, in your own words what another person is saying and feeling. It is an important part of genuine listening.

Try some of these on your own write a mirroring response for each of the following situations.

- 1) "No, you cannot go to your friend's house after school!"

How would you respond using a mirroring response?

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- 2) "You said I was your best friend and now you only want to hang out with them!"

How would you respond using a mirroring response?

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- 3) "I'm having the worst time in school right now!"

How would you respond using a mirroring response?

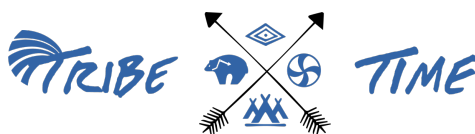
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**Challenge - In your interactions today, try mirroring one person and mimicking another, just for fun. (maybe just do the mimicking in your head) Compare the results!**





# Then Seek to be Understood

## Activity 5

### Class discussion

The first half of **Habit 7** is seek to understand, the **second half is as important** as the first half but the second half might require courage. Giving feedback is an important part of **seeking to be understood**.

Essential questions....

**Do unexpressed feelings ever go away?**  
**What does it mean to be understood?**

Write on the board

THINK...

Is my feedback **T** rue? Is it **H**elpful? Is it **I**nspiring? Is it **N**ecessary? Is it **K**ind?

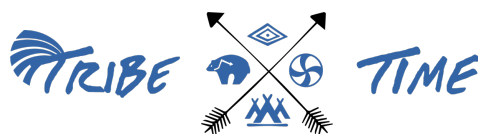
## “You” statements vs “I” statements

When a person feels that they are being blamed—whether rightly or wrongly—it’s common that they respond with defensiveness. “I” statements are a simple way of speaking that will help you avoid this trap by reducing feelings of blame. A good “I” statement takes responsibility for one’s own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.

Use “I” messages instead of “you” messages...

**Say** “I am concerned that you might have a temper problem”.

**Not** “You are so incredibly mean.”





# Feedback “I” vs “You”

Change the following responses from “you” statements to “I” statements

When a person feels that they are being blamed—whether rightly or wrongly—it’s common that they respond with defensiveness. “I” statements are a simple way of speaking that will help you avoid this trap by reducing feelings of blame. A good “I” statement takes responsibility for one’s own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.

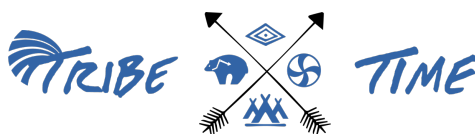
<b>Example Scenario</b>	Most nights after school, you go to a friend’s house. You are supposed to call your mother if you are not coming straight home but often you forget because you are having fun with your friends.
Blaming statement	“You can’t expect me to call every time. You know where I am. Quit being such a nag about it.”
“I” Statement	“I know feel worried when I come home late. I am sorry it upsets you. I will try harder to remember to call”

## Now you do it...Seek to be understood

<b>Scenario</b>	A friend always cancels plans at the last minute. Recently, you were waiting for them at the Fun Park, when they called to say they couldn’t make it. You have been waiting for 20 minutes.
“You” statement	‘You are such a jerk. You said you would call and then you stood me up again. You are so rude!’
“I” statement	
<b>Scenario</b>	You are working on a group project, and one member is not completing their portion. You have repeatedly had to finish their work.
“You” statement	You are not doing any work and you are going to make my grade drop. Quit being lazy and do your share of the work.
“I” statement	
<b>Scenario</b>	Your mom keeps dumping more chores on you. One of the chores is to watch your younger sibling and make sure they do their chores as well.
“You” statement	“That is not fair. You make me do my work and his work. Plus, you make me tend him. Why is everything my responsibility?”
“I” statement	



Challenge - In your interactions today, try using “I” statements instead of blaming “You” statements





# You have Two Ears and One Mouth!

## Speak up!

### It requires courage!

Again, nobody knows you like you do. When you are with others, do you speak up? Take this self-evaluation to find out. Be honest with yourself. It is the only way to learn what type of speaker you are.

When do you have the most difficult time giving feedback to others? Why?

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If you genuinely listen to another person, what happens when you express your feelings, ideas, suggestions or opinions? \_\_\_\_\_

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When was the last time you kept your thoughts and feelings to yourself even though you really wanted to share them? Why didn't you share them? How did you feel about it afterward? \_\_\_\_\_

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Think of a situation where your constructive feedback would really help another person. How can you express your thoughts with them in an honest, responsible way? Will the feedback really help this person or am I doing it just to suit myself?

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Now that you have analyzed your speaking actions, what can you do to improve your practice of speaking up! \_\_\_\_\_

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