
A good listener



A caring person is a good listener who is genuinely interested and available and who doesn't criticise or tell us what to do.

Here are some ways to make sure that you really 'hear' the messages that are sent to you:

1. Make sure that you give people time to reply to you. Let them finish what they are saying.
2. Listen to what is being said rather than focus on what you want to say.
3. If you are not sure you understand, ask the other person to clarify or give an example.
4. When you are listening, focus on the speaker – make eye contact and don't keep looking elsewhere.

When it is your turn to speak:

1. Avoid talking about yourself – "me too."
2. Avoid giving advice or diagnosing the problem.
3. Try not to change the topic, even if you feel uncomfortable with it.
4. Encourage dialogue by asking OPEN, rather than CLOSED questions.

Closed questions do not move the conversation along and can be answered by one word and

you can feel like you are interrogating. e.g. Did you like the exhortation?

Open questions stimulate conversation. These questions require a longer answer.

e.g. What did you think when the exhorter said.....?

Helen Smallwood
