

# **Effective Skills for Retreat Ministry**

## ***Listening Skills Workshop***



## **Participant's Packet**



# Some Helpful Communication Skills

## NON-VERBAL: THE SOLER RULE

1. **Squarely:** Keeping one's body directly toward the one talking; not angling or turning one's body sideways, but keeping it squarely in toward the person.
2. **Openly:** Avoiding crossed arms and legs. Maintaining an open posture to the one talking.
3. **Leaning Forward:** Avoid leaning away or back in an inattentive posture. Maintaining a posture that communicates attention and the intent to listen.
4. **Eye Contact:** Avoid looking away, wandering eyes. Maintaining a comfortable amount of eye contact.
5. **Relaxed:** Avoid evident tension, anxiety or intensity in oneself as a listener. Maintaining a relaxed and comfortable presence.

## VERBAL:

1. **Paraphrase:** Stating in your own words what the other person has said to you. Ex.: "So you think you're really in love with him?" "It sounds like Sally really hurt your feelings."
2. **Reflecting Feelings:** Identifying feelings by name, simile, figure of speech or action urge. Ex.: "You're very upset." "You feel like a caged animal." "You were really jazzed." "You felt like driving off a cliff."
3. **Reflecting Behaviors:** Reporting specific, observable actions without making accusations or judgments. Ex.: "That's the third time you have gotten out of your chair." "You are speaking a hundred miles an hour." "You are tapping your feet, cracking your knuckles and flipping your pencil into the air."
4. **Perception Check:** Describing what you perceive to be the other's inner state in order to make sure you really understand what the person feels or is saying. Ex.: "That seemed to hurt your feelings. Did it?" "You seem pretty depressed. How are you feeling?" "I get the impression that you're feeling more comfortable now. Is that the case?"
5. **Summarizing:** Pulling together the different things a person has said into a summary statement. Ex.: "It sounds like your breakup with your boyfriend, your struggle with your parents and your tense work situation are really getting to you, making you feel upset and depressed."
6. **Short, Encouraging Responses:** Offering brief, verbal indications that one is listening. Ex.: "Uh-huh." "I hear you." "Okay." "Yeah."
7. **Questing:** Different from questioning or interrogating, questing involves asking open ended questions that invite the talker to say more. Ex.: "So, John, you seem kind of down...want to talk?" "You were fired...how did that feel?" "So, your Dad is mad at you...what's that like for you?"



# Roadblocks to Effective Listening

**Directions:** Think about your own communication habits. In the space provided, rate each item, noting how often those roadblocks appear in your conversation.

5-Very often;      4-Often;      3-Sometimes;      2-Seldom;      1-Never

- \_\_\_\_\_ **1. Ordering, Directing, Commanding:** “Stop complaining.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **2. Warning, Admonishing, Threatening:** “If you do that, you’ll be sorry.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **3. Moralizing, Preaching, Exhorting:** “You shouldn’t get angry like that.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **4. Lecturing, Teaching, Giving Logical Advice:** “If you just think through objectively....” “It’s obvious that....”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **5. Advising, Giving Solutions, Suggesting:** “If I were you, I would....”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **6. Judging, Criticizing, Blaming:** “That’s an immature point of view.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **7. Praising, Agreeing, Placating:** “But you’re one of the nicest people I know.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **8. Ridiculing, Shaming, Name-Calling:** “Don’t be such a jerk.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **9. Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing:** “Maybe you’re really just jealous.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **10. Reassuring, Sympathizing, Consoling:** “I’m sure you’ll feel differently about it tomorrow.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **11. Probing, Questioning, Interrogating:** “When did you start to feel this way?”
- \_\_\_\_\_ **12. Withdrawing, Distracting, Diverting:** “This is depressing. Do you know any good jokes?”



# LISTEN

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me, as strange as that may seem.

Listen!!! All I asked was that you listen. Not talk or do – just hear me.

Advice is cheap. You can get both Billy Graham and Dear Abby in the same newspaper.

And I can do for myself; I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged or faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But when you accept the simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Feelings make sense only when we understand what's behind them.

So, please listen, and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn. Then I'll listen to you.

