

Do You Hear Me?

1074

When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.

—Ernest Hemingway

Objective: To identify ways in which we communicate verbally and non-verbally and to recognize that we can deliver powerful messages without uttering a word.

Materials needed: None.

Procedure: Have mentees count off by twos (*one, two, one, two*). Line up—one line of ones, one line of twos. Mentees should be facing each other.

Activity 1. Have the ones think of a favorite vacation or concert. Each will be describing this experience with their hands behind their backs. The twos will be the listeners but will not comment verbally in any way. Time this activity for two minutes. When time is up, process what happened.

Discussion questions:

- How did you feel during this experience?
- What was it like to speak with your hands behind your back?
- How did it feel to speak to someone who gave you no verbal response?
- Listeners, how did you feel?
- How did you, as listeners, let the person know you were listening?

Activity 2. While still in these lines, have the twos think of a favorite gift they received. Tell the twos that they will be describing the gift and why it was their favorite to the ones. Tell the ones that they are to completely ignore the speakers. Time this for two minutes. When you have finished timing, process what happened.

Do You Hear Me?

24

Discussion questions:

- How did you feel during this experience?
- What was it like, number twos, to be completely ignored?
- How did you, the non-listeners, feel about ignoring the speakers?

Activity 3. Mentees are still in line. Number ones, think of a television show that you like. Describe the show to the number twos. Number twos should listen, but not have *any* eye contact with the person. Time this for two minutes. When time is up, process what happened.

Discussion questions:

- How was it to talk with someone who made no eye contact?
- Listeners, did you try to sneak a peek at the person speaking?

Activity 4. Have the number twos think of their favorite musician/singer/group. Then have them choose one of their favorite songs. Have them explain why that is their favorite song. Number ones should look at their partner, but their body language should clearly say, "I'm not listening." Time this for two minutes. When time is up, process what happened.

Discussion questions:

- How did you feel during this?
- Did you feel listened to? Why or why not?

Closure:

Have mentees share examples of non-verbal methods of communication. Mentees may role-play these examples.

Are You Still Listening?

26

Are You Still Listening?

Discussion questions:

- Did the speakers share correct information about the mentee facing away from the group?
- How did it feel to have people talking about you while you were facing outward?
- Even though they were sharing your responses, were you comfortable with it?
- Which question was the hardest to answer? Why?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- How would you feel if what was said about you was *not* the response you gave?
- Has this type of thing ever happened to you—hearing someone say you said something when you did not?

Closure:

Listening requires practice to be sure that what is said is what is heard. How can you make certain that what you hear is what is being said? *Answers: By clarifying responses, watching body language, concentrating on what is being said, and so on.*

Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parent, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers.

—Socrates

Objective: To practice active listening skills and to improve communication.

Materials needed: Note cards or small pieces of paper, and pencils or pens.

Procedure: Ask mentees to identify different methods of communication. *Answers: Eye contact, body language, verbal responses, etc.* Read the quote of the day. Ask mentees who the author was. Did that come as a surprise? Would their parents/guardians agree with Socrates?

Then ask mentees to write the answers to the following questions on the paper.

- Name one person you admire or look up to.
- Name one thing you *want* people to think about you.
- Name one thing, realistic or not, you would like to be when you grow up.
- Name one thing you are proud of.

Have mentees count off by 3's or 4's depending on the size of the group. Each group should have three people. Have each mentee share their answers within the smaller group. After 4 or 5 minutes, stop the activity. Have mentees put their cards out of sight. One person in each group should turn their chair around so that they are facing away from the others. The two remaining mentees in each group will now share what they learned about the person facing outward. After each mentee within the group has had a turn, bring all the groups back to the circle.

25