

# DAILY READING

## DAY 1

### Active Listening

Active Listening is the foundation for everything that we will do in this program.

The intention of Active Listening is to hold space for another person and support them as they work through an issue in a way that can lead them to find the answer to their problem on their own. Our core belief when doing Active Listening and most every process we will use in this program, is that the person has the answer they are seeking inside of themselves. Our job as facilitator is then to provide time and space and support while they go on their own journey to find what they are looking for. We want them to go through their internal process without the listener having an agenda for how they get there. We do this by seeking to understand what they are saying and letting them know we hear them.

The OPP approach to Active Listening is to mainly use three simple elements:

- Be Silent (offer space for them to talk and even pause without interruption)
- Echo (feedback what you heard them say)
- Ask Meaning (What do you mean by ..... ?)

Active Listening can help someone move deeper into their real truth by being heard and more importantly, hearing themselves when you echo back their words and thoughts. The sharing and the echo complete a cycle that allows the person to go down deeper into their own truth. In fact, by using Active Listening, we can help them develop their own neuropathways into their sub-conscious so they can learn to better access this wisdom on their own.

This skill is often cited as critical for improving our relationships, our parenting, our leadership and anything that involves communication between two people.

It is the foundation of most approaches that teach communication skills like: Parent Effectiveness Training, Steven Covey's 7 Habits (#5 - Seek to Understand and then to be understood) and most every Facilitation and Therapy approach.

If a person can master this skill, they will notice a vast improvement in almost anything they do. It is also key to becoming a more kind and loving person who can actually be effective in helping others with whatever they are dealing with. By practicing the guidelines on the following protocols, you could soon become an effective listener in this kind of work and in every aspect of your life.

# ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening (also called: Reflective Listening) may be most powerful when it is the disciplined use of only the following 3 elements:

1. BE SILENT (SILENT and LISTEN have the same letters)

2. ECHO (So, what I'm hearing you say is ..)

3. ASK MEANING (What Do You Mean By -----?)

While focusing on the above actions, as a Listener we also want to:

Maintain Eye Contact

Be Curious

Seek to Understand

Get to Clarity

Go on a Journey --- the Other Person's Journey

Secondary actions we can use in our Listening are:

- Start with Open-Ended Question: i.e. What do you want?
- Ask Clarifying Questions like: How old is your son? – follow with Echo
- OK to slow person down (more details) or speed up (less details) – Echo

Instructions for Speaker (The person sharing and doing their work):

Allow yourself to share whatever comes up for you. If a thought comes into your mind, no matter how irrelevant it may seem, please share it with your Listener.

## What To Avoid During Active Listening

Active Listening could be considered simple, as it only requires doing three basic things. Actually, it may be quite difficult at first because of all the things you want to avoid doing.

When we listen to another, we may have impulses to say or do things we've learned from our culture and our childhood. Most of these impulses are not useful when we want to be caring, understanding and helpful. These impulses can be avoided with practice and awareness.

The responses that are best to be avoided when doing Active Listening are shown below. With practice, these impulses can be minimized and you'll find yourself naturally being with others in a more compassionate, loving and effective way.

### 1. Asking Why - "Why did he beat you?"

Asking WHY something happened or WHY did you do that, is a question looking for a rational answer. This drives the person back into their rational mind to find a logical answer, i.e. it puts them back into their head. We want to move them deeper into their heart, and their feelings. Also, most rational answers are not the true source of a problem.

### 2. Giving Advice - "I think you need to forgive your wife."

There are times when someone will be asking for your advice, due to your expertise or experience with an issue. This is not to be presumed. Unless specifically requested, Giving Advice is disrespectful and short circuits a person's process. Giving Advice usually will involve your own projections and implies a judgement that the person can't find their own answer inside of them.

### 3. Sharing Your Story - "I used to hate my wife too, but I ...", "I was just like you, I ..."

When someone shares something that relates to your own past, it is natural to want to share your story with them. This is not helpful when you are working with or simply holding space for someone who needs your attention on THEIR issues and THEIR experience. When you share, it takes the person out of their process so they can respond cordially to your story.

### 4. Negating / Minimizing - "That's all he did? That doesn't seem so bad."

Many issues are based on experiences that may seem unimportant or even trivial to others. Saying things like: "That's all he did? That doesn't seem so bad." is disrespectful at best, in most cases, it will end the process and any trust they may have had with you. Judging the depth of a wound or the impact of an event is always to be avoided.

### 5. Projecting Your Stuff onto Another - "I'm so stupid"; "you've got a mean critic"

Any judgement, diagnosis, interpretation or advice that comes up for you around what a person says, is most likely based on your own thought processes and experiences. They are therefore projections of what you would do or why you would do something. Please avoid.

## 6. Judging Anything or Anybody - “That was a vicious thing to do.”

To share any moral or quality assessment is simply projecting your beliefs, values and limitations on another. Saying things like: "That was a vicious thing to do." are not helpful to human relations of any kind.

## 7. Rescuing - “I hate my looks.”..... “I think you look great.”

When a person says something that seems overblown or just not true, let it be their truth for them to process. If they say: "I hate my looks" don't Rescue them from their feelings by saying "I think you look great." Let them have the feeling or judgement so they can find the true source of where they took on this negative opinion.

## 8. Diagnosing - “I feel like hurting somebody.” - “I bet you were an abused child”

When someone describes an issue, it is your responsibility as a friend or facilitator, to listen and perhaps guide them through a process where they can discover what the issue truly is and how they can resolve it. To assume what the issue is or how or why it came about is to cut off hundreds of other possibilities and limit the healing potential of any process.

## 9. Fixing Their Problem - “Let me talk to your wife.”

People often need to share what is happening to them. They need to hear themselves talk about it. In this way, they often gain insights into an issue and ideas of how to work with it. Offers to fix their problem or how they could fix it themselves are usually received as insulting and only increases their emotional distress.

## 10. Consoling Someone During Processing – “It’s OK, don’t be sad.”

We want a person who is sharing sad feelings to allow for these feelings to lead them to some insight or resolution. The feelings are often a gateway to their inner world or subconscious where the true source of their distress can be revealed. Consoling or gently touching someone in distress takes them away from this healing opportunity.

## 11. Telling or Teaching Information without Permission

Giving direction or information to someone who is in their feelings takes them out of their heart and puts them back into their head to receive the teachings. It is the task of the listener or facilitator to create a context or process for the person to discover this information for themselves.

# MENTORS SESSION GUIDE

## DAY 1

### INTENTION

- Mentee shares current situation and experiences being listened to
- Mentor & Mentee make confidentiality agreement

### ACTIVE LISTENING

#### *Mentor:*

Thank you for this opportunity to be with you today.

Before we get into a regular format for these 40 days, I'd like to focus today on the one thing that is the foundation of everything we will do in this program.

And that is to listen to you and connect with you, wherever you are at right now.

Also, we will be making some agreements with each other as we pursue this program.

For today, I commit to keeping everything you share with me confidential.

Do you have any question about this and are you willing to make that same commitment to me today?

*[mentee commits]*

Thank you. So with that said, I'd like to ask you: how are you doing with everything going on in the world today?

What is your current living and working situation? How are you feeling emotionally about your life right now?

Or you may simply share what is up for you right now.

*[mentee shares; mentor uses active listening until 8 min. left]*

How was that for you?

How was that to be listened to in this way?

I'd like to hear your feedback on my listening:

- What did I do that worked for you, and
- What did I do that may not have worked for you?

## **WANT DO YOU WANT?**

One more thing for today; what do you most want to get from this Omega Point Program?

Imagine the best possible thing you could get from this experience: A new job, the perfect partner, full blown enlightenment, freedom from an addiction, etc.

I invite you to go BIG!

*[mentee shares]*

## **CHECK OUT**

We will end each session with a check-out.

It is an opportunity to release the energy of the moment and to transition to everyday life.

Each of us will share how we are feeling and any reflections on what we just experienced.

Usually, when we check in and check out, we do not interrupt or offer observations. I will model it now.

## **SCHEDULE THE NEXT SESSION**

### **HOMEWORK**

Please start a journal for this program.

You could record your notes from these exercises in a notebook or a document on your computer or phone.

I'll also be taking notes for you as we go along.