

Listening

How can listening be communicating? I'm not saying anything!

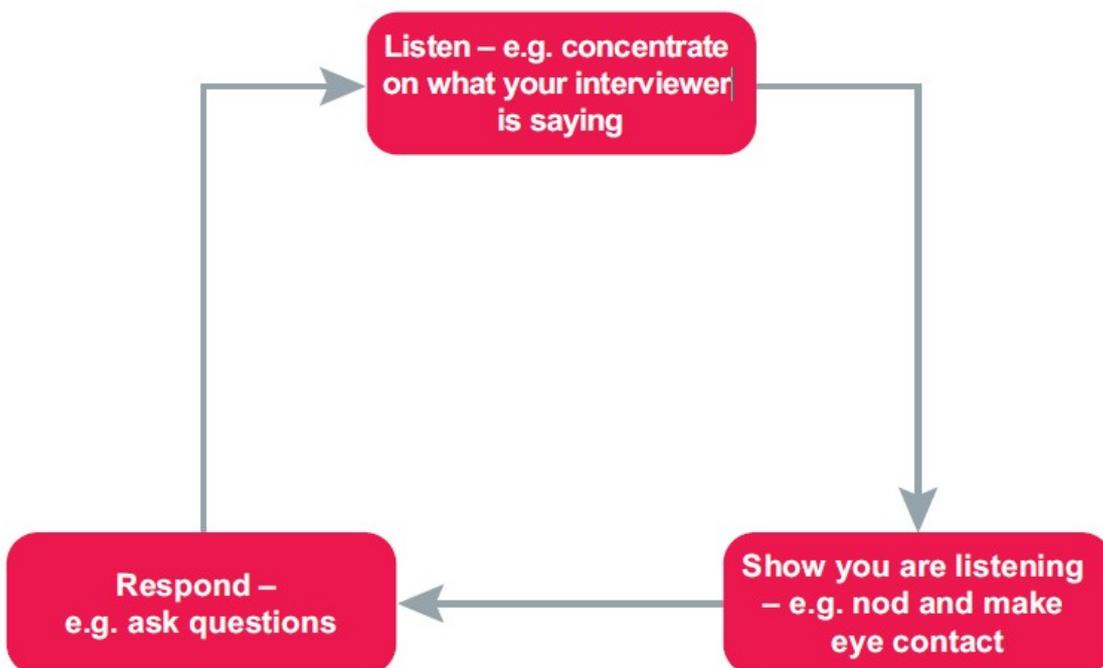
Communication is a two-way street. It isn't just one person talking at another; it is an exchange of ideas between two or more people.

One of the key skills in this process is being able to listen and understand the ideas that people are trying to tell you.

What is active listening? Don't I do this all the time?

Active listening is different to just hearing. When you listen you are actively making a choice to understand what the other person is telling you. You are also getting ready to reply with either an answer to a question or another point that fits with the conversation. **Think about how you already do this, with your family, friends or mentor.**

Active listening can be broken down into three steps:



Why is it important?

Not only is it important to listen and to understand what people are telling you but to let them know that you are interested and listening to them.

If the interviewer thinks that you aren't interested in what they are telling you, do you think that they are likely to employ you? **Active listening will help you stay focussed and give relevant answers.** If you do

miss anything that an interviewer says, it's fine to ask them to repeat a question.

How to show you are listening

And it's not enough just to do the listening – you have to actually show that you are listening as well. For example:

Telephone interview

During telephone interviews it can be difficult to show that you are listening but there are several things that you can do.

- ➔ Use short words after things the interviewer says: 'ok,' 'oh right,' 'that's interesting,' etc
- ➔ Answer questions correctly
- ➔ Ask questions about what the interviewer is saying

These tips will also help you in face-to-face interviews.

If you have trouble remembering the question in a telephone interview, you can take notes.

Face-to-face interview

It can be easier at a face-to-face interview to show that you are listening as you can use non-verbal communication and body language:

- ➔ Eye contact
- ➔ Facial expressions
- ➔ Nodding – this can show agreement and understanding

REMEMBER:

Don't interrupt, but find natural points in the conversation to show that you are listening

Activity

Write down an example of a time when you think you have demonstrated that you can listen effectively.

Next time you meet your mentor, discuss this example, and make sure to practice your active listening skills! Ask for specific feedback on your non-verbal communication and **think of three ways that you can improve.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.