



ACTIVITY 1: Listen to Understand, not to Respond- “Last Word First”

Are you a good listener? Most people would say “yes”.

Truth is when most people start talking about specific people, events, problems... our brain starts to go into search mode – looking for a similar experience to relate to. Inevitably we think OUR story is much more interesting, relevant, fun. We immediately start to judge two stories, ours and theirs.

ACTIVITY:

With a partner, start to have a conversation. The only caveat is that once one partner stops talking, the other participant must use the last word of the other person as their first word.

1. Find a partner and face each other
2. Hold a conversation. Talk about anything you want.
3. Only rule – you must start each of your sentences with the last word your partner said.
4. Don't worry if the conversation rambles.

Benefits to look for:

People don't always need to respond

- Sometimes people just need to bounce ideas off someone, and need them to just listen.

Focus your mind

- Our brain is constantly operating – in fact, it's hard to stop talking to ourselves or thinking – that's when we miss communication.

Focus on the other person

- Many reasons we jump to conclusions and interrupt someone thought process, but it doesn't make for good listening
- Only after we've listened FULLY can we contribute something valid.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did this listening activity show the importance of not immediately searching for a response?
2. In the real world, do you find that sometimes you plan your response while someone is still talking?

Listening is about giving up the control of the conversation for the time the other person is talking.

Stop talking to yourself and really listen.

OUTCOMES:

- Build trust
- Form strong relationships
- Be in the moment
- Listen all the way through to what the speakers are saying versus formulating their response while they are talking.