

Week 23^a

Theme Week: Conflict Resolution

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They’re either speaking or preparing to speak. They’re filtering everything through their own paradigms, reading their autobiography into other people’s lives.”

—Stephen Covey

Resources Required

- Two chairs

Teacher Self-Reflection

Pay attention during the day to how well you listen to your students and colleagues. Are you thinking of what you will say in response, or are you truly listening to the other person?

Focus of the Day: Improving Listening Skills: “Do You Mean?”

Background Knowledge

The foundation of good communication is listening. Listening to others without trying to “fix,” change, or distract them from what they are feeling is very important to the strengthening of their emotional intelligence. Beyond listening, your perception of a speaker’s nonverbal signals (eyes, facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language) is critical to understanding the message. Remember, most of what the speaker is communicating to you is nonverbal. Finally, your biggest challenge to becoming an empathetic listener may lie in the strength of your own self-awareness, without which you will not be able to manage uncomfortable emotions and control impulses.

Activity for the Day

1. **Today we are going to focus on our listening skills. Listening is the foundation of good communication.**
2. **It isn’t always easy to listen to another person because while you are doing so, you must experience your own emotions and body sensations.**
3. **As a result, sometimes it is easier to just give advice or to distract the person from her or his emotions than it is to actually listen.**
4. **Let’s play a listening game. It is called “Do You Mean?”** (You will need to role-play this activity in front of the class. Place two chairs facing each other in front of the room.)
5. **I need a volunteer to be a mirror for me. I will talk for 15 seconds about some experience I’ve had, including my emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations.** (Here’s an example: “I was driving to school and was running late. I felt really scared and my stomach was tight, and I had a headache. The traffic was terrible, and I just made it to school in time.”)
6. **The volunteer will listen to me and then share what she or he heard me say, including the emotions and physical sensations I talked about. The listener begins with these words: “Do you mean . . .”**
7. **Then I will give the listener feedback about how well she or he mirrored my communication. I will rate the listener anywhere from 1 to 5, a 5 meaning that he or she really heard and understood everything that I shared.**
8. **If I don’t give the top rating, I will repeat portions of my experience until the listener can mirror everything I shared originally and eventually receive a rating of 5.**
9. **Let’s try it.** (If time permits, switch roles and repeat the activity.)

