



Are You Even Listening?

Do you ever feel like your children aren't listening to you? Before you get angry, think about the way that you listen to others. Are you setting a good example?

There are four different kinds of listening:

Ignoring – You are not paying attention to someone at all.

Pretending – You look like you are listening but you're actually thinking about something entirely different (or thinking about what to say in response).

Passive listening – You are listening to what the other person is saying but are not showing it. You might be looking at them without nodding, smiling, responding, etc.

Reflective Listening – You are listening to what the person is saying by doing four things:

- **Showing Empathy** - *Standing in the shoes of the person who is talking without agreeing/disagreeing, advising, telling, etc.*
- **Acceptance** - *Having respect for the person talking simply because she is a person and not making judgments about what he/she is saying*
- **Congruence** – *When the listener is open and honest with the speaker and responds the way they actually feel.*
- **Concreteness** – *Listening to the little things that are being said, not just the big picture.*

After you have listened carefully, here are some other skills you can use:

Encouraging: Indicates attentive listening and encourages a person to continue to speak. Could be nodding, smiling, or saying things like, "Go on."

Paraphrasing/ Clarifying: After listening, you repeat what you heard. For example, “It sounds like you are having a hard time in math class because you aren’t interested.” This makes the speaker feel like you are listening and will help them open up even more.

Summarizing: At the end of a talk, re-saying what you thought were the most important parts can help make sure everyone is on the same page.