



Overview:

A fun and active communication game that demonstrates the difference between active listening and disinterest. Participants role play both listening to and ignoring their partners and note the differences.

Sequencing:

Use as a demonstration prior to drawing out the do's and don'ts of active listening or to reinforce them. Any time it is necessary to practice communication skills, especially the specific skills required for effective listening and rapport building.

Potential:

This game has the potential to:

- Show the critical importance of listening in rapport building
- demonstrate the need for participating together in effective communication
- provide listening skills and tools
- Draw out (hidden) needs and wants
- identify pitfalls and barriers to effective communication
- challenge behaviour
- Show active listening do's and don'ts
- demonstrate the experiential learning methodology

Participants:

Any number of participants, in pairs
(use one group of 3 if odd number)

Timing:

Time to play: 5 minutes
Time to debrief: 10 minutes

Links to more challenging versions of this game:

Ratings:



Listening



Fun



Management
Tools



Mental Models



Questioning



Minutes



Indoors



Comments:

“A fun and active way to demonstrate the opposite extremes of rapport building and the critical importance of being able to listen to someone else.”

Wendy Pettit, Trainer

Logistics:

Essential:	Optional:
Materials: None	Music: None
Props: Chair for each participant	Assistants: None
Set-up: Get participants to find a partner and sit them in pairs facing each other, knee to knee.	

Script:

Introduction:

Get participants to pair up

Please find a partner for this game, it can be the person sitting next to you.

Sit facing each other.

Get participants to choose person A and a B.

In your pairs, choose a person A and a person B. A, please think of a topic to talk to B about for 1 minute. Choose a topic you really care about.

A's please hold up your hands. O.K. Have you found a topic to talk about?

B you are totally disinterested and you are to do whatever it takes not to listen to A without leaving the room.

A you're to keep going regardless of what B does.



Main Activity:

Round 1

Start Round 1

Person A start talking about the subject that interests you.

B remember not to listen to what A is saying. You have one minute. Go.

After one minute call stop

Stop. Wherever you are at, please stop.

Ask participants how that interaction felt for both parties

- *A, how did it feel to talk about something you really cared about, and not be listened to?*
- *B, what strategies did you use?*
- *How many As were able to keep talking for the full minute?*
- *Who can relate to this type of interaction?*

Round 2

Reverse roles and ask A to actively listen to B on any topic that B choose.

Okay, it's now revenge time.

B you are going to talk about a subject you feel passionate about and A is going to listen.

Only this time A is going to listen very carefully, actively, focusing on what B has to say and showing real interest in the subject. You have one minute. Go.

After one minute call stop

Stop. Wherever you are at, please stop.

Ask participants how the interaction in the second round felt for both parties

- *B, how did you feel talking about your chosen subject?*
- *How did you feel about person A when they listened to you?*
- *A, how did it feel to listen actively?*
- *How did that feel different from Round 1?*

Debrief

Debrief the game

Please complete your debrief sheets headed the "Active Listening Lite"



Debriefing:

(Please note: possible responses are in parentheses)

- Get participants to record their individual experiences on the Debrief Sheets. Talk them through the questions on the sheet.
- Debrief all participants as a group:
 - *What were the key differences between rounds one and two?* (Round 1 I felt awful, Round 2 empowering)
 - *Person A. How did you feel about B in Round 1?* (Felt they were ignorant, arrogant, disinterested, self-centred)
 - *Person A. How did you feel in Round 1?* (Angry, Frustrated, Resigned)
 - *Did you feel Person B cared about you at any time?* (No)
 - *Person B. How did you feel about A in a round 2?* (Great. Friendly. Warm.)
 - *Person B. How did you feel about yourself in a round 2?* (Great. Empowered)
 - *When did you feel rapport with your partner?* (Round 2)
 - *Given the way in which you both operated in Round 1 & 2, what are the key Do's and Don'ts of Active Listening?* (Draw out the Do's and Don'ts).

Source:

WorldGAMES 2011 - based on a Conflict Resolution Network exercise.

Trainers Note:

If you liked this simple game, then you will love these suggestions regarding more sophisticated versions that can be found in our Mini Packs and on our Silver Disk as shown:

- **Active Listening** - the same exercise but with trainer's tips and a participant handout of "do's and don'ts".
- **Building Rapport** - while active listening is a key element of building rapport, this exercise colours in some of the other techniques for participants to practice.
- **Matching and Mirroring** - another key element in building rapport with others. This one is even more powerful and often misunderstood.
- **Advocacy and Inquiry** - rounds out the key rapport building technique with one that every manager should understand.
- Each of these techniques is explained step-by-step in **WorldGAMES Manager Tool Kit** series of self-help guides for managers.



Debrief Sheet

1. What were the differences for you between rounds one and two?
2. How did it feel to participate in Round 1?
3. How did it feel to participate in Round 2?
4. What assumptions did you make about each other in each round?
5. What can you learn?