

Levels of Listening

Description	Behaviours
Half Listening Paying attention to some things, tuning out on others. Focusing on your reaction & counter-argument. Focus on your agenda/ views & waiting for a chance to break in. Distracted by personal thoughts and what's going on around you.	 Doodling or texting. Carrying on doing what you were doing. Commenting to others. Less eye contact or non-verbal engagement.
Level 1 – Listening to the words Little attempt at empathy or rapport – responding mainly with rules, facts & logic. Looking for fit with your agenda. Learned behaviour.	 Asking questions ('Tell me more...'). Quite a lot of judgemental behaviour ('That's not right...') & closed questions ('Don't you think that...?') Paraphrasing & summarising. Coming in early with own solutions.
Level 2 – All the above plus listening to emotions Sensing & responding to underlying emotions. Using words, tone & body-language to build rapport. Learned behaviour	 Active mirroring & matching. Taking emotions into account when responding (may not disclose or share these observations). Defusing high emotion before bringing conversation onto more level basis.
Level 3 – All the above plus listening to the context, what lies behind the words & emotions Seeking to understand the speaker's ideas, the emotions behind them & the underlying context. Recognizing the speaker's intent. Showing interest & awareness of underlying issues – where they are coming from – the wider context – putting self in their shoes. Ignoring distractions Focus on the message & ignoring mannerisms	 Good eye contact & body language. More likely to reflect what observe ('You seemed hesitant when we came to that particular issue....') or acknowledge the emotions involved ('This is a hard issue to address...'). More linking & bridging ('If we combine these two options we might achieve what you need while minimising costs...'; ...we might be able to defray some of the pressure while still achieving what the management committee is looking for'.) Remaining engaged while taking notes. Holding back from offering solutions until later in the interaction.