



Session 9

Lesson 17: Relational Youth Ministry - Listening Skills



Scripture Text

- “Listening involves much more than passively hearing the words that come from another person’s lips. Effective listening is an active process that involves using both your ears and your eyes. The counselor listens to words but also is aware of what the counselee reveals through tone of voice, gestures, posture, facial expressions, and other nonverbal clues.”
-- Gary Collins, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers*, (Navpress, 1993) p.25



Key Terms

- Active listening
- Asking questions
- Relationships and programs
- Earning the right
- Modeling



Lecture Objectives

- List practical ideas for developing listening skills
- Describe the difference and relation between “relationships” and “programs”



To Think About Before You Go On

- Describe the function that “listening” has had in your relationships. How have relationships developed when listening was noticeably absent? How have they developed when listening was a noticeable element?

Learn To Listen (con't)

Listening is the most important skill to building relationships with kids. Unfortunately, most of us are poor listeners. Over the years, I have had to learn how to improve my listening skills. On numerous occasions, students have told me I am a poor listener. (I love that kind of encouragement). Having been challenged in this area, I began to ask why it is so hard to listen and how can I change.

Becoming a good listener

- Train yourself to have good listening habits
 - a. Maintain good and appropriate eye contact
 - b. Maintain good and appropriate posture
 - c. Avoid distractions
 - d. Be an active listener

- Good eye contact
- Verbal affirmations
- Appropriate posture
- Direct conversation (“three sigh” principle)

- e. Ask good questions (see previous section)

Even though you are not a professional counselor, you will spend many hours counseling teenagers. The following is a list of questions that help individuals identify the problem areas in their lives. You will use the same questions over and over, gently demanding a different response each time. In doing so, you will enable them to see the real problem.

- **What’s wrong? What do you want?** (*Here you are finding out what is going on in their head.*)
- **What are you feeling?** (*Here you are trying to identify what is going on in their heart. In the second state you may want to pursue the emotion that they describe, seeking to bring deeper clarity.*)
- **What are you doing about it? What are you going to do about it?** (*Here you are moving towards change. What do they think needs to happen? What are they willing to do.*)

After you finish this first round of questions, don’t give in to the temptation to offer advice. Instead go through the list of questions again, asking them to give you a different answer. The problem will almost always be more serious and complex, and will more than likely deal with a larger area of their life.

- f. Make sure you have time to listen
 - Read books on listening
 - Watch others who are good listeners
 - Practice good listening habits in every conversation

Observations of role-playing:

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Relationships Extend Beyond Programs

- Use the time before and after a meeting to talk with kids.
- Use meetings to set up one on one time.
- Pay attention to how students responded to the message
- Follow-up when you say you will

Earn the Right to Be Heard

- Until you know a kid, they don't care what you have to say. Be consistent
- Show your love for them
- Be patient
- Pray for the right timing

When to Present the Gospel

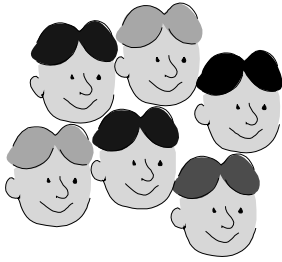
- Trust in the Holy Spirit
- Measure the level of your relationship
- What is the cost if you do? What is the cost if you don't?
- Measure their willingness to hear the message

Train Others to do Contact Work ...
(See Building a Youth Ministry Team)

... by modeling

- What you do is far more important than what you say
- Think of those who influenced your own life
- Make sure your leaders understand the importance of modeling

Why Students Like Me, Why They Don't



Note: This list focuses upon:

Why Students like me

When I am:

- Available
- Funny
- Relevant
- I listen
- Not judgmental
- Not their parent
- Show boundaries and discipline
- Push the edge
- I'm immature (do stupid things)
- I'm mature (know where to draw the line)
- I'm in love with Jesus
- Consistent
- Sincere
- Don't embarrass them in front of peers
- Take part in deep conversation
- Respect them
- Challenge them
- Allow them to be kids
- Have realistic expectation

Why Students Don't

When I am the opposite of the previous list or do any of the following:

- Put them down
- Am overly sarcastic
- Never admit I am wrong
- Don't feel I include them
- Talk bad about them
- Don't keep my word
- Feel I show favoritism



- Go back and rethink the 'To think about before you go on' questions on the first page of this lecture.