10 Helpful Hints to Become a Better Listener

1. Listen with your whole body – eyes, ears, (use all your senses)

2. Avoid audible sounds while someone else is taking – “uh huh”, “right”, “umm”,

3. Don’t interrupt!
   a. Pause after their last comment
      i. Exercise #1 – the next thing you say after they finish must include a word from the last sentence they utter
      ii. Exercise #2 – wait at least a full second (count to yourself, “one thousand one”)
   b. Watch their body language intently to be sure they are really finished expressing their thought

4. Keep your comments to a minimum

5. Ask more questions than you answer using:
   a. Sincere interest
   b. Genuine curiosity
   (Make sure the questions have to do with what they are talking about)

6. Your non-verbal communication is very important
   a. Maintain eye contact (harder to do in a crowded-room social situation)
   b. Lean forward
   c. Nod your head, but don’t be a bobble-head!

7. Stay “present” – don’t let your mind wander off somewhere else; stay interested and engaged

8. Smile when appropriate; show concern with your facial expression when appropriate

9. Show and have respect for the speaker (person you are listening to)

10. Repeat what they say. “So if I understand you correctly, __________. Is that correct?”

11. (Bonus hint) Be yourself – Nobody likes a fake.

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