

Active listening

How can we practice empathetic, active listening?

Empathetic listening is the top level of listening. At this level we are listening to understand, and we are accessing our curiosity about people while being non-judgemental. This requires *deferring your opinion, listening to the whole story, and understanding the surface and also the thoughts and feelings behind the surface.*

To achieve empathetic listening we have to slow down, be patient, talk less and listen more, and repeat back what was said to ensure we don't overlook anything and to ensure the person feels heard.

Empathetic listening requires discipline to see it through the eyes of the user, and *willingness to have beginner's eyes.* You must teach yourself to treat every user interaction as though this is the first time you've ever heard this issue, even if you think you have heard it before.

