

# THE ESSENTIAL POSITIVE COMMUNICATION™ CHECKLIST SURE-FIRE WAYS TO SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING



It's not enough to *be* a good listener, you also need to *show* that you are fully engaged. Use Shepa Learning Company's checklist to be a really effective listener.

— Gayle Hallgren & Judy Thomson, CPA, CA

- Pay attention; be all in.** It's absolutely the most important way to show you are listening (and to actually be listening), *"Treat attention as all or nothing. Black or white. When someone is speaking, stop everything and just listen. Commit 100%."* — David Brooks, author of *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*
- Use body language to show you want to hear more.** Nodding and using appropriate facial expressions reassures the other person that what they are saying is being 'heard'. Lean in.
- Use 'nudging' phrases or words.** Acknowledge what they are saying, "good idea", "interesting", "I am going to remember that", "I have a couple of questions, but I will wait until you are finished". This is not interrupting; it is simply a way to show your interest in what they are saying.
- Avoid "involuntary emotional leakage", aka micro expressions.** [Paul Ekman](#), psychologist and co-discoverer of micro expressions, calls a micro expression, *"a spontaneous expression coming from your unconscious."* They *"flit across the face in less than a third of a second, the snap of a finger."* Here's the scary part, they are *"an emotional signal that offers a clue as to how you really feel at the moment—despite whatever impression you may be trying to project."*
- Make a decision you are going to like that person.** This is a way to automatically keep those negative micro expressions from rearing their ugly head. Most of us have a feeling when we meet someone if they like us or not, or simply aren't interested in us. This is happening at a neural level so chose to 'like that person.'
- Stop the chatter in your head.** Relax and listen without thinking about what you plan to say in response.
- Instead of being an active listener, be an adaptive listener.** Read of our tip [Should you be a cheerleader or content sponge?](#)
- And the absolute dead giveaway that you aren't listening.** If you interrupt (not recommended, but sometimes you must) remember their last sentence. Write it down if need be. After interrupting someone, there's nothing worse than saying, "please go back to what you were saying" and they can't remember what it was. Worse, neither can you!

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