

A good listener:

- is silent as much as possible if someone is upset and is trying to get their feelings out. It's best to say things like "I see" or "really" just so they know you're still listening.
- isn't judgemental and accepts what the other person says.
- sticks with the subject and doesn't try to take the person's mind off unpleasant things.
- shows that they've heard and understood by reflecting the person's feelings back to them. For example, if a friend says in an angry voice "I just can't do this. I've tried and tried and it's no good." A reply that shows you've heard their frustration would be "You sound pretty annoyed by it all."
- puts aside their own problems while they listen. For example, if a friend is upset about an argument they've had with their parents, it doesn't help them to hear about arguments you've had with your parents.
- asks questions about what happened to make sure they've understood properly.

A good listener does **not:**

- interrupt
- say what the friend should or shouldn't do but goes over the options
- drift off and think about something else.

One good way to become an effective listener is to take special note of the way other people listen to you.

New Zealand Government

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good communications

Good communication

It can be **difficult to tell someone about something**
if you're upset or angry with them.

1) **Work out before you talk to them exactly how you feel and what you are going to say.**

By beginning what you say with “I” rather than “You”, you will sound less aggressive and blaming. “I can’t seem to make myself understood” would be better than “You don’t understand me.” Using an “I” statement makes people far more likely to co-operate with you as they don’t feel they have to defend themselves.

2) **Try to choose a good time to talk it over**

rather than when everyone is rushing around. Sometimes it can be best to wait until the person is alone because that way you both have more privacy.

3) **Using “I” statements, say clearly what the problem is and how you feel about it.**

It helps to be as specific as possible. “I feel upset when you’re late” would be better than “I feel upset when you are so thoughtless.” The person then knows exactly why you feel the way you do.

Sometimes people may say that you shouldn’t feel a certain way over something they’ve done, but this is unfair. Even if they think you’re overreacting, you still have the right to feel however you do.

It's **always** worth
talking with **people**

4) **Say clearly what you want to happen.**

Remember to be reasonable as you may have to compromise on some things. You may not get exactly what you want, but you’ll feel better that you said how you felt.

It’s always worth talking with people about things that annoy you – they may be quite happy to change, but you’ll never know until you ask them.

Being a **good listener**

Being a good listener helps you get on with people. It builds trust between friends.

It’s about more than just listening to someone’s words, because people communicate by more than talking. They use:

Facial expressions: raising eyebrows, frowning, smiling

Body language: nodding head, crossing arms, shrugging shoulders, looking away

Tone of voice: loud or soft, sad, excited – the feeling behind the words.

When you’re listening, notice if what they say matches their tone of voice, eg, when someone says “I’m OK” in an unhappy voice. In this way you can pick up the whole message.

Talk it over