Active listening is a technique that enables you to fully concentrate on what others are saying, and to understand their complete message. It can make you more effective at work, increase your ability to influence and negotiate, and prevent misunderstandings.

Make sure that you really hear what the other person is saying. Stay focused, and avoid falling back into old habits.

Becoming an active listener can increase your productivity, improve your relationships, and help you to avoid conflict.

1. Pay Attention
   Look at the speaker, be aware of their body language, and ignore distractions.

2. Show That You’re Listening
   Nod, smile and say “yes” or “uh-huh” from time to time, to encourage the speaker to continue.

3. Defer Judgment
   Allow the speaker to finish their point before you offer a counter argument. It’s a discussion, not a race!

4. Provide Feedback
   Reflect the speaker’s words back to them, and ask questions to check that you understand correctly.

5. Respond Appropriately
   Be open, honest and respectful of the speaker’s opinion – even if you don’t agree with it. If you understand one another’s positions, you can work toward a shared goal.

To learn more about Listening Skills, read the article at www.mindtools.com/listen