

The CON Artist's Guide to Effective Listening

Action Plan



My Assessment

My current listening strengths are:

My biggest listening challenges are:

The barriers that most affect me are:

Priority Areas

- Maintaining focus and attention
- Managing emotional reactions
- Asking better questions
- Reducing judgment/assumptions
- Demonstrating active listening
- Other: _____

Action Plan

Skill to develop:

Practice opportunity:

Success measures:

Start by noticing

Spend a week noticing how you listen. Record what you notice in a journal. Try to select different types of settings (classroom discussions, faculty meetings, student advising, with family/friends).

How do you tend to listen?

Levels of Listening

Level 1

(Internal Listening)
Listening with yourself in mind

Level 2

(Focused Listening)
Listening attentively for words, tone, expressions

Level 3

(Global listening)
Listening with attention and heart; to the whole person

Assess yourself

Review the barriers. What is your biggest challenge?

01	02	03	04
Cognitive Distractions	Emotion & Psychology	Communication	Environment
Multitasking	Being Right	Derailing	Physical noise
Rehearsing	Making Assumptions	Relating	Physiological distraction
Dreaming	Emotional State	Advising	

Choose an area to improve or a tool to practice

5 tools to try: Repeat, (Don't) Paraphrase, Name, Ask questions, Attend to non-verbals (theirs and yours) AND/OR focus on one area:

Build Your Focus

- Eliminate distractions
- Practice mindfulness techniques
- Visualize what the person is saying

Manage Your Mindset

- Be a CONartist, approaching the conversation with curiosity and learning
- Breathe, ask a question
- Check in with yourself (hungry, angry, lonely, tired, sick – HALTS)

Set Out For Success

- Take care of your needs
- Adjust your environment
- Name your limitations

The CON Artist's Guide

A quick reference to effective listening



The CON Artist Mindset

Curiosity: Approaching with genuine interest

Openness: Receptive to new perspectives

Non-judgment: Suspending evaluation



Levels of Listening & Key Signs

Level 1: Internal (self-focused)

Key sign: "Reloading" while the other person is talking

Level 2: Focused (other-focused)

Key sign: Asking clarifying questions and reflecting back what you're hearing.

Level 3: Global (context-aware)

Key sign: Fully present and tapping into your intuition about the person's emotional state

A new kind of CON artist

Active Listening Tools

- Repeating: Mirror key phrases
- Naming: "I notice..."
- Questions: What/How vs Why
- Non-verbals: Demonstrate engagement

Powerful Questions Bank

- "What matters most about...?"
- "How would you like this to be different?"
- "What else are you noticing?"

Common Barriers & Solutions

- Cognitive Distractions → Eliminate distractions, build your mindful muscle
- Emotion & Psychology → Notice, name, reframe, be a CON Artist
- Communication → WAIT (why am I talking?)
- Environment → Change what you can and name what you can't