

Effective listening is not a trick or a verbal gimmick. It is a skill that comes from practice and from a desire to develop good interpersonal relationships.

### **TIPS TO BECOME A BETTER LISTENER**

1. STOP TALKING!
2. Concentrate – keep the focus on the speaker
3. Look at the other person
4. Empathize with the other person – try to understand what is really being said and felt
5. Reflect to the speaker what has just been said or what you think was just said
6. Ask non-threatening open-ended questions
7. Appropriately communicate non-verbally
8. Be aware of your emotions and prejudices
9. Control your anger (or any other emotion which may be keeping you from listening)
10. Get rid of distractions
11. Get the main points
12. Share the responsibility for communication
13. React to ideas, not the person
14. Don't argue mentally
15. Listen for what is not said
16. Listen to how something is said
17. Don't antagonize the speaker
18. Allow the speaker to speak until she or he has completed their train of thought
19. Avoid classifying the speaker
20. Avoid jumping to conclusions

Go through these individually. Choose those where you think you do well and those where you need to improve. Get together with your spouse and discuss. Have your choices been similar? Different?