Four Ways to Listen Effectively

1. **Use your body to say “I’m listening.”**
   - make frequent eye contact
   - nod your head
   - keep your body oriented toward the speaker (head, arms, legs)
   - say “yeah,” “uh huh,” “I see,” etc.

2. **Use “echo responses,” repeating a word or phrase spoken by the speaker.** Echo responses allow you to direct the flow of conversation without major interruptions. This technique unobtrusively focuses the attention of the speaker on things that might also be unclear to you.

3. **“Paraphrase” or restate what the speaker has said in your own words.** This is a crucial skill that requires practice.
   a) Include both facts and feelings. Body language and tone of voice will clue you to feelings.
   b) A paraphrase contains no hint of judgement or evaluation, but describes sympathetically.
      - “So you believe very strongly that...”
      - “The way you see it then...”
      - “You were very unhappy when he...”
      - “You felt quite angry with your neighbor in that situation...”
      - “If I’m understanding you correctly, you...”
   c) Focus on the speaker. “You...”

4. **Summarize the speaker’s basic points as you’ve heard them.** A summary is a statement of the key points of information offered by the speaker. Use the summary to focus the speaker’s statement in terms of issues and solvable problems, instead of personalities. In the final summary, obtain the agreement of the speaker that you have summarized both accurately and completely.