



“You always complain that I don’t know how to show my emotions, so I made these signs.”

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Suggestions for Improving Communications with Children

- **Be interested.** Ask about children’s ideas and opinions regularly. If you show your children that you are really interested in them they will respond.
- **Avoid “dead-end” questions.** Ask children the kinds of questions that will extend interaction rather than cut it off. Avoid “yes” and “no” questions. Rather, ask children to describe, share, and explain.
- **Extend conversation.** Try to pick up a piece of your child’s conversation. Respond to his or her statements by asking a question that restates or uses some of the same words your child used. When you use children’s own phrasing or terms, you reinforce their confidence in their conversational and verbal skills, plus you reassure them that their ideas are being heard and valued
- **Share your thoughts.** Share what you are thinking with your child. For instance, if you are puzzling over how to rearrange your furniture, get your child involved with questions such as, “I am not sure where to put this shelf. Where do you think would be the best place for it?”
- **Observe signs.** Watch the child for signs that it is time to end the conversation. When a child begins to stare into space, give silly responses, or asks you to repeat several of your comments, it is probably time to stop the exchange.
- **Reflect feelings.** One of the most important skills of a good listener is the ability to understand his or her thoughts and feelings. As a parent, try to mirror your children’s feelings by commenting, “It sounds as if you’re angry with your math teacher.” Restating or rephrasing what children have said is useful when they are experiencing powerful emotions that they may not be aware of or understand.

AM I A GOOD LISTENER???

SOME QUOTES...

When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say and two-thirds about him and what he is going to say. ~ Abraham Lincoln ~

Listening well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well. ~ John Marshall ~

The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention. ~ Richard Moss ~

To be listened to is, generally speaking, a nearly unique experience for most people. It is enormously stimulating. It is small wonder that people who have been demanding all their lives to be heard so often fall speechless when confronted with one who gravely agrees to lend an ear. Man clamors for the freedom to express himself and for knowing that he counts. But once offered these conditions, he becomes frightened. ~Robert Murphy~

I married the first man I ever kissed. When I tell this to my children they just about throw up. ~Barbara Bush, former first lady~

HINTS TO SKILLFUL LISTENING

- Maintain eye contact with speaker
- Focus on content, not delivery
- Avoid overreacting emotionally
- Avoid distractions
- Focus on speaker’s key points
- Remember...there are words, thoughts, and feelings on every issue

REUNION TIMES



ISSUE TWO

USAREUR MINISTRY TEAM

OEF/OIF

Successful Reunion begins now!

The Reunion Times is a series of eight newsletters designed to help deployed personnel prepare for redeployment. The Army core values of *Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage* are matched in these newsletters by some important family values of *Listening, Demonstrating Care, Rekindling Relationships, Sensitivity, Honesty, Intimacy, and Patience*.

There are certainly many other values. However, the *family values* mentioned above will be addressed, one each, in the next seven newsletters.



"My! The little rascal has changed since I left!"

REMEMBER, it is not just the words that you say, but how you say them that is heard and felt by the listener!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 1 Listening is a SKILL
- 2 Hearing our Children

NEXT ISSUE:

Demonstrating Care

IDENTIFYING CHANGES

We all know that change is a way of life. This applies particularly to those in the military. Moves, new assignments, new jobs, family changes all impact on our daily lives. There are other changes that occur that are not always visible... changes in attitude, in goals, in dreams, in life cycle, just to mention a few. In order to cope with the stresses of change, it is absolutely necessary to communicate effectively with family and loved ones. Rather than simply reacting to the myriad of changes that occur during deployment, take the time to 1) identify them, 2) determine who they impact on the most, and 3) address them one by one.

ALSO, remember that some issues cannot be solved. However, they can be managed.

- Chaplain (LTC) Eric Erkkinen

Read what Harvey Mackey says in an article, "Listening is the Hardest of the Easy Tasks"...

More than a century ago, a young woman who had dined with both William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli explained why she preferred Disraeli: "When I dined with Mr. Gladstone I felt as though he was the smartest man in England. But when I dined with Mr. Disraeli, I felt as though I was the smartest woman in England."

Being a good listener also means paying attention to context as well as content. A listener who can paraphrase what you've said without changing your meaning is a great listener. A listener who merely can repeat your words is a parrot.

It takes skill and determination to be a good listener, but the effort yields terrific results. Perhaps the biggest reward to being a good listener is that you also become a better talker. You learn the best way to get people to hear what you're saying, and you find that you don't need to force-feed your ideas and opinions to others. You'll know you've attained your goal when you can utter two sentences in an hour-long conversation and the other speaker thanks you for your input and adds, quite earnestly, "You always have so much to say!"