

# Huddle Up

## Communication Series #1

### Four Rules of Active Listening

#### 1 Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.

**Restate:** Paraphrase what you think the person has said.

**Summarize:** Bring together the facts and pieces of the problem to check understanding.

#### 2 Be non-judgmental

Set aside your judgment and withhold blame and criticism in order to fully understand someone. You don't have to like them or agree with their ideas, values, or opinions.

#### 3 Give your undivided attention to the speaker.

Focus fully on the speaker. If you are distracted, you may not notice body language, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues that may tell you what the speaker is feeling. Show your interest in what is being said. Use brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening (such as "yes" or "oh?").

#### 4 Use silence effectively.

Silence is a very valuable tool, especially when used to gather information. You can learn a lot by just being silent and listening. Allow for comfortable silences to slow down the conversation. It is important to give a person time to think as well as talk. Deliberately pause at key points for emphasis. This will tell the person you are saying something that is very important to them.



### Active Listening

The most common communication problem is when one or more of the people involved are not listening. To listen effectively, we have to do more than just hear what is being said. We must be engaged and practice active listening.

Using active listening in your everyday interactions can help you communicate more effectively. Active listening can help you to:

- build rapport
- increase understanding
- create trust

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