ACTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

"The gift of giving one's full attention and interest is simple and powerful"

Most of us are fortunate to be born with the ability to hear, among others. Unfortunately, few people are ever taught that active listening as a learned skill that requires constant practice and a continue commitment to mindfulness.

This common courtesy is too uncommon.

If you're looking for the secret to strengthen your interpersonal interactions and relationships as well as your abilities to "size others up," this is it.

Along these lines, when you are with someone, be with them fully without thinking about what you will say or do next. Force yourself not to interrupt whoever has the floor. Be present. Listen to their words and the meaning behind them. Observe their body language. Tune in. Try to understand their motives.

As with any skill, it's a lot easier to improve when it's something you *want* to do. Take a genuine interest. Love talking to people. Ask them questions. Learn about them. Find ways to help them. Serve them. Fill a need. Share a resource.

What else can you notice when you force yourself to remain present in the moment?

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW SKILLS TIPS (TIME: 5 MINUTES)

Review the section supplement, "Active Listening Skills Tips."

ACTIVITY 2: PUT INTO PRACTICE (TIME: 15-20 MINUTES)

Rely on these active listening practices in your next **three** conversations with different people.

ACTIVITY 3: REFLECTION (TIME: 5-10 MINUTES)

Take an extra few minutes to journal about each one and how concentrating and fully engaging enriched both your experience and, if possible, that for the other person(s).
Any surprises?

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