

# ma'yan



## Active Listening: Tips & Tricks

**Body language**— though this may vary in other countries and cultures, in the U.S there are generally some clear body signals that help people know that you are listening. Turn your full body toward the person you are listening to. Uncross your arms. Make eye contact. Nod. And in general, look like you like them!

**Displays of emotions are good and do not need fixing**— sometimes we confuse the feelings for the thing that caused the feelings. We hear someone cry and think that we need to get them to stop crying. But really, crying is how people heal from the thing that made them cry. If someone is showing their sadness or rage or embarrassment (or even joy!), you can feel honored that they are comfortable enough with you to show it. Don't worry that they are getting too emotional—humans are good at regulating.

**Make sure you understood them**— ask clarifying questions and say things like, “Oh, so I think what you're saying is... is that right?”

**Listening goes better when you are also listened to at some point**—our capacity for active listening increases the more we practice and the more we are listened to ourselves. But it's not always a one for one situation. We can't ask our children to listen to us as much as we listen to them. Make sure you have people in your life who will listen to you and give you space.

**Listening is a learned skill**— no one is born the perfect active listener. Like anything else, it is a skill we can learn and improve upon. Go easy on yourself and keep trying.

**Remember the judge, comparer, the self-orienter and advisor**— if you feel yourself going into one of those roles, pause, take a breath, and go back to active listening.

**Remember what to listen for**— observations, feelings, needs, requests