

Listening and Responding

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Two Types of Listening

Disconfirming Listening

- Defensive listening – we interpret messages as criticism and personal attack.
- Pseudo-listening – we pretend to listen but focus on our own thoughts and so miss what the speaker says.
- Confrontational listening – we listen for flaws in the message to refute the speaker's points or attack the speaker personally.
- Literal listening – we listen to messages on the content level and ignore body language or tone or other messages that might characterize our relationship with that person). We overlook non-verbal communication and the emotional tone of a message.

Confirming Listening

- Comprehensive listening – when we listen to learn or understand.
- Evaluative listening – when we use critical thinking to judge the soundness of a message.
- Appreciative listening – when we want to enjoy and appreciate the messages. For example, the way we listen to a funny friend.
- Empathic listening – when we want to understand and experience the feelings of the speaker.

Two Types of Responding

Disconfirming Responses

- Defensiveness – when we focus on how others perceive us, rather than the content of the message.
- Ignoring – when we do not address what the speaker has said.
- Aggression/Criticism – when we humiliate or blame the speaker.

Confirming Responses

- Prompting and Questioning – when we encourage the speaker to continue. “Go on.” “What happened next?”
- Reassuring and Concern – when we express concern and communicate caring. “That sounds hard but if anyone can do it, you can.”
- Advising and Analyzing – when we analyze the speaker's problem and provide advice. Should be used with caution. Our analysis might be wrong and our advice unwanted.
- Paraphrasing – when we interpret and reword the speaker's message in our own words.

Taken from, Lane, Shelley D. Interpersonal Communication: Competence and Context, Second Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 2010.