



LEADERSHIP TOOL 006

ACTIVE LISTENING CHECKLIST

A practical checklist to strengthen listening, build trust and improve the quality of everyday leadership conversations.



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INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most important leadership skills, yet it is often confused with simply remaining silent while another person speaks. Genuine listening requires curiosity, attention and the discipline to understand before responding. When leaders listen well, they build trust, strengthen relationships and create conversations where people feel heard rather than managed.

Poor listening often happens unintentionally. Leaders may interrupt, think about their response before the other person has finished speaking or make assumptions about what is really being said. Even well intended advice can prevent people from fully expressing their thoughts or identifying their own solutions.

This checklist highlights practical behaviours that support active listening. It is not intended to be followed mechanically during a conversation, but used as a reminder of the habits that encourage understanding, reflection and meaningful dialogue. Used consistently, these behaviours help leaders become more present, ask better questions and respond with greater clarity and empathy.

CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE CONVERSATION

- ☐ Remove distractions.
- ☐ Decide to listen before solving.
- ☐ Be clear about the purpose.
- ☐ Allow enough time.

DURING THE CONVERSATION

- ☐ Give your full attention.
- ☐ Maintain appropriate eye contact.
- ☐ Listen without interrupting.
- ☐ Allow silence after important points.
- ☐ Ask open questions.
- ☐ Ask follow up questions.
- ☐ Clarify rather than assume.
- ☐ Listen for emotions as well as facts.
- ☐ Notice tone and body language.
- ☐ Summarise regularly.
- ☐ Check your understanding.
- ☐ Avoid jumping to advice too early.
- ☐ Stay curious.
- ☐ Resist making the conversation about yourself.
- ☐ Encourage the other person to think aloud.

ENDING THE CONVERSATION

- ☐ Agree key points.
- ☐ Clarify any actions.
- ☐ Confirm next steps.
- ☐ Thank the other person for sharing.
- ☐ Reflect on how well you listened.