

5n5

Is Anyone Out There Listening?

Five Tips for communicating and getting through to each other



1. **Communication is a two way street:** With all the different ways we can communicate with each other these days, using cell phones, email, and social media, sometimes it's amazing how little we actually understand each other! It's important to remember that "Talking" and "Texting" is not the same thing as "Communicating". Real communication involves Understanding, Emotion and Intention. It also involves two sides. Using the LEAP method can be a good reminder to LISTEN, EMPATHIZE, and find some small place you both AGREE and then PARTNER together on a plan of action.
2. **Stop and Listen:** We all know when someone is not really listening to us when we are talking, and it never feels good. When you really want to communicate, you must stop all the other things you are doing and really LISTEN. That means putting down the cell phone, not texting or doing some other activity. We also need to put aside our point of view for a moment so we can really, truly absorb what the other person is trying to say. It's ok to tell someone you can't listen right now and give them a better time when you really will be able to give your full attention.
3. **Listen with your Eyes:** There is a lot of information we can "listen to" with our eyes. By noticing a person's body language we might "hear" that they are holding back, or are feeling anxious. Being skillful at gathering nonverbal cues is a powerful communication skill and can help us tap into our own empathy for the other person and communicate more deeply.
4. **Speaking Skills:** When it's your turn to speak, work on staying tuned into your own emotional state and stress level. Remember it is ok to slow down and ask to take a break if the conversation becomes too intense. It's always best to stick to the topic at hand and not get diverted into attacks or personality differences. Using an "I" Statement can help you stay with your own experience and avoid emotional blaming or personal attacks.
5. **Be a person of your word:** Let your values lead the way when you are communicating. This will help you steer clear of gossip and toxic talk. And if you say you will do something... be sure to follow through! That way people will trust in you and seek you out for more important and satisfying communication!

