

# LISTENING EXERCISE

**Employee:** “This is a difficult process.”

**Supervisor:** “No it isn’t. Don’t worry. Once you get used to it, you’ll find it easy.”

Divide into groups of four and assign the following roles: two (2) conversationalists and two (2) observers. As time allows, we will try to give each person in the group a chance to take both roles.

## The Conversation

The topic of conversation is “Are Men or Women Better Listeners?” Each conversationalist should express his/her opinion on this topic and offer evidence to support his/her point of view.

More importantly, each conversationalist should practice listening skills and work hard on understanding the other person’s perspective. He/she should identify the other person’s argument, ask for clarification if there are any points he/she doesn’t understand, and encourage the person to support his/her point of view.

The observers should divide up their responsibilities so that one person is focusing on each of the conversationalists.

## Feedback

After the conversation has gone on for about five minutes, the group should spend another five minutes on feedback. The feedback should proceed as follows:

**Feedback on the Conversationalists:** The feedback should focus on each person **as a listener**. Did the listener seem interested? encouraging? engaged? Did he/she listen nonjudgmentally? Did he/she help the other person clarify his/her thinking? Did he/she do anything specifically to help the other person communicate his/her message (include nonverbal communication here)?

**Feedback from the Conversationalists:** Each person should then give the group feedback on what he/she experienced **as a listener**. Were you able to listen nonjudgmentally? What did you do to help the other person clarify his/her thinking? Did you feel you did anything to help the person communicate his/her message (include nonverbal communication here)?

Everyone should practice active listening when he/she is receiving feedback. In particular, try to understand the feedback first before responding to it. You may ask questions for clarification as necessary, but any responses to the feedback (especially arguments with it) should be held until it is your turn to speak.

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