

## Coaching Notes – Listening Strategies

Ideas on being an effective listener:

- Maintain eye contact with the person that is speaking
- Ask questions for clarification
- Nod and smile when the person makes specific points
- After you feel the person has finished talking, pause 3 seconds before you speak.
  - This will reduce the chance of interrupting someone that has merely paused to collect their thoughts and has not really finished talking.
  - If they have finished talking it will reinforce to them that you are being thoughtful in your response before speaking.
- Listen for ideas and central themes
- Put yourself in their shoes
  - If you want to understand where a person is coming from, you have to see things from their perspective and frame of reference.
- Don't jump to conclusions
  - It's easy to assume that you know the rest of a sentence or message after hearing the beginning. Avoid prejudging a message so you can hear all of it.
- Concentrate and resist distraction
- Use time to your advantage
  - Most people can think three or four times faster than they speak. Don't let your mind drift when listening thinking about other things you need to do or what your reply will be. Focus exclusively on the person and trying to pick up on non verbal cues.
- Rephrase what they just said and feed it back to them.
  - For example, if the client said they were unhappy with the returns they have been getting on their investments you could say, "It sounds like you are not thrilled with the way your investments have been performing."
- Rephrase and feedback not just what they say but how it sounds like they are feeling.
  - For example, if the client said they were unhappy with the returns they have been getting on their investments and their tone of voice suggested worry and concern you could say, "It sounds like you are not thrilled with the way your investments have been performing and that's becoming a worry for you." (empathic listening)
  - This is one of the highest forms of listening. You are not trying to fix the problem, but by letting the client know you heard them, by picking up on how they are feeling, they will feel completely heard and understood.
- Actually care about what they are saying.
  - Many of the techniques we have discussed will come naturally if you truly are listening with the intention of understanding and not just with an intention to respond.