



## G2G - On Listening

### Objectives:

- a. Discussing the importance of active listening.
- b. Creating positive communication between the younger and older G2G participants.

'Active listening' means, as its name suggests, actively listening. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Understanding how to "listen" is important for a number of reasons: fostering good self-esteem, maximizing productivity, improving relationships, and even becoming a better speaker. Creating a foundation of active listening will help foster the relationship between the partners.

### Method:

1. To begin, play a few rounds of telephone with the class to demonstrate the importance of having good speaking and listening skills.
2. Then have the participants read the following poem:

### Listening/ Anonymous

**When I ask you to listen to me  
and you start giving me advice,  
you have not done what I asked.**

**When I ask you to listen to me  
and you begin to tell me why  
I shouldn't feel that way,  
you are trampling on my feelings.**

**When I ask you to listen to me  
and you think you have to do something  
to solve my problem  
you have failed me,  
strange as that may seem.**

**Listen! All I asked was that you listen,  
not talk or do...just hear me  
advice is cheap; 25 cents will get  
you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham  
in the same newspaper.  
And I can do that myself.  
I am not helpless.**



**maybe discouraged and faltering,  
but not helpless.**

**When you do something for me  
that I can do for myself,  
you contribute to my fear  
and inadequacy.**

**But when you accept as a simple fact  
that I do feel what I feel,  
no matter how irrational,  
then I can quit trying to convince you  
and can get about the business of understanding  
what's behind this irrational feeling.**

**And when it's clear, the answers  
are obvious and I don't need advice.  
Irrational feelings make sense when  
we understand what's behind them.  
Perhaps that's why prayer works  
sometimes, for some people...  
because God is mute and doesn't  
give advice or try to fix things.  
He or (She) just listens and  
let's you work it out yourself.**

**So please listen and just hear me  
and if you want to talk,  
wait a minute for your turn...  
and I'll listen to you.**

3. Discuss:

- a. What is listening?
- b. What responses are unwanted according to the narrator of the poem? Use quotes from the poem.
- c. What are responses that are appropriate (or wanted) according to the narrator?
- d. What kinds of situations have you been in when you have had to listen very carefully to someone talking?
- e. Why is it important to listen carefully?
- f. Is there a stanza in this poem that you relate to more than others?
- g. Have the younger and older participants describe situations when they have not used good speaking or listening skills. What were the results?