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## Listening

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### What Listening is....

**Listen** in order to **connect** vs listening to try to fix someone or their issues.

True listening is being a witness to the other person's experience...literally seeing the world through the other person's eyes....It is not about who is right and who is wrong

**Empathic listening** is the way to truly love someone including ourselves (The previous Chabad Rebbe..Take from Hayom Yom)

- There is beauty and value in silence (**W.A.I.T.** ask yourself “**Why Am I Talking**”)
- Listening is being **curious** to learn more about the person or situation
- Listening is **resonating** with another and being **present**
- Listening is giving my **full attention** and allowing the other person to be the point of my focus
- Listening can be mirroring or paraphrasing what I heard to **gain clarity**
- This is actually practicing **true bittul (humility)** and living Chassidus...
- Mishlay: 18:13 “If one gives an answer before hearing, it is folly and shame.”

### EGO = Edging G-d Out

Imagine listening as if you were a midwife, being present to another, allowing someone to give birth to themselves and their own answers.

- The Ba'al Shem Tov, taught that when Moshe was speaking about being the one to transmit the 10 commandments to the Jewish people... “I was standing between G-d and you.....” to mean that the I, the ego, is what stands in the way of our relationship with G-d (it can also be what gets in the way of all of our relationships with others...the ego)

### What listening is not...

Reactive listening isn't really listening ....rather than really hearing the other person, we're actually listening to our own opinions about what they are saying, which looks something like: “I've heard this before” or “I agree / I disagree”, “I like that / I don't like that”, “she's right / she's wrong”, “that's true / that's false”

## Do Not....

- **Ask “Why?”**

**Speaker:** My friend said we would meet for coffee at 2 PM, she came an hour late. I was so frustrated.

**Inappropriate Responses:** Why did she come late? What did you do to give her the impression that your time isn't important? Why are you getting upset over such a little thing?

- **Give unsolicited advice**

**Speaker:** I am so upset at my brother for not calling me on my birthday

**Inappropriate Responses:** Is this really important? Maybe you really need to look at the positive side and forgive him. I would send him an email reminder next time.

- **Unsolicited sharing**

**Speaker:** My daughter goes out and doesn't call me or tell me where she is or what time she will be home. I get really worried.

**Inappropriate Responses:** You think that's bad? I have it much worse; my son sometimes stays out the whole night and doesn't answer his cell phone!

- **Negating the other person's feelings**

**Speaker:** My husband came home last night and told me he was disappointed that I didn't call the plumber to get our shower fixed. I was really upset!

**Inappropriate Responses:** That's all? What are you getting so upset about? Is this really worth wasting your energy on? Men will never understand us anyway, don't even try.

- **Trying to fix someone else's problems**

**Speaker:** My friend misunderstood what I was trying to say and got angry. We are not talking anymore.

**Inappropriate Responses:** Let me talk to her, I can actually drive over right now and set this straight between the two of you.

- **Consoling**

**Speaker:** I am really scared about losing my job

**Inappropriate Responses:** Don't worry, I am sure you will find a new one with more pay by the end of the month!

- **Judging the speaker**

**Speaker:** "I was really afraid to tell Rachel the news"

**Inappropriate Responses:** That's ridiculous, she is mature enough and she can handle it. I have never had any issue with sharing with Rachel before. Maybe you just have a problem with confrontation.

- **Denying someone their experience**

**Speaker:** I am so upset at my sister for saying that about me in public!

**Inappropriate Responses:** "I am sure she didn't mean it. This is really not like you to take this so seriously. Are you really going to be upset at her for this?"  
Now take a few minutes to think of a new response, from a place of conscious listening...go back to examples above and turn them into empathic listening

## **IMPORTANT:**

Yes, there are times when others will want to hear what we have to say about an issue they are sharing.

They actually might want and appreciate our input and advice.

One great way to offer this kind of support is to ask permission after really listening with curiosity.

It might sound something like this, "I hear you and I have some thoughts on this that might be helpful. Would you like me to share?"

Or "How can I be supportive?" "Would you like my opinion on this?"

This concept of asking permission to offer advice is very respectful and an important tool we use in coaching