



## Skilled listeners make strong connections...

In a noisy world which constantly bombards us with information, news and busyness, it's so easy to forget to stop and listen. It takes time, focus and effort to listen well and as a result, it can fall low on the priority list. It's only when people get anxious or relationships become 'ratty' that they become aware that they're feeling unheard or haven't connected properly with important others in awhile. It can then take some significant repair work to mend connections again. Becoming a skilled listener is a wonderful preventative measure that keeps relationships thriving and people healthy. What does it take?

### Quality and consistency are fundamental...

These are two key aspects of listening that all skilled listeners know. Firstly, make it count! Quality listening has a completely different feel to it than off-handed, absentminded listening. The 'only-half-here' type of listening is just as satisfying to either party as eating artificial food. It leaves you feeling hungry and empty and like you've wasted your time. It disconnects rather than connects and it's actually better to wait for a time to listen properly rather than pretending to listen.

Quality listening means being free of distractions. Put the 'i' devices away, don't answer the phone and turn the TV or any other distractions off. Alternatively, have a common activity in which you do the listening and talking, i.e. cooking. Boys will talk much more easily if they're involved in an activity where you're both doing something together, rather than looking at each other.

When listening, put aside all preconceived assumptions and ideas and check that you've really understood what the other person is saying, from their perspective. Remember, what they believe is true, *is true* for them, even if it may not seem logical to you. When consciously listening with purpose, it's important to take it in turns so that each person is able to share their story completely, rather than defend their perspective.

### Keep up the habit consistently and model great skills for your family

Consistent checking in, will keep relationships strong. Simple questions like, "What was the highlight of your day?" or "What was the most interesting thing that happened today?" are sure to stimulate conversation and quality communication. Sharing quality time and conversation is the most important part of demonstrating care and concern. Make it a daily practice.

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit [www.barehands.com.au](http://www.barehands.com.au).

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- ✓ Sometimes we forget to listen until our relationships are struggling.
- ✓ Quality listening is what builds relationships and keeps them strong.
- ✓ Consistent connecting will cause relationships to thrive.

*"The word LISTEN contains the same letters as SILENT."*

Alfred Brendel

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