

TRANSLATING WORK SKILLS INTO LIFE SKILLS

Activity - 4 Kinds of listeners

Review the following descriptions of the Four Classic Types of Listeners and determine which one(s) you most relate to. Then, assign each of the four a percentage to indicate how often you become that type of listener with your child.

The Journalist

If there is one kind of listener that's a good default, it's The Journalist. The Journalist asks good questions, some open-ended ("how are things with your friends?") others closed ('did you have a good time?'). His body language lets the speaker know he is tuned-in. He makes eye contact, nods, and his facial expressions ebb and flow with the speaker's words. He clarifies what the speaker says with an occasional 'is that right?' He also listens for what's not being said. The result is the speaker feels very attended to, taken care of, and focused on. Young children, especially, need The Journalist.

I am this type of listener ___ percent of the time.



The Vacationer

The Vacationer is not really present for the speaker. Though he may appear to be listening, he is actually vacationing in his mind — thinking about work, somewhere he'd rather be, or the score of the ball game. This kind of listening can be great if the speaker simply wants to spew words or just talk at someone (who could be anyone). However, most people don't like talking to someone who is not really there. Usually, a speaker can tell when she is talking to a Vacationer.

I am this type of listener ___ percent of the time.



The Handyman

This is the kind of listener, stereotypically speaking, that guys tend to like. The Handyman is useful. He's ready to fix any problem. He nods and listens intently, mainly with an ear toward what he can offer. The advantage of the Handyman is that sometimes people want to hear solutions. On the downside, sometimes people just want to be heard, not fixed.

I am this type of listener ___ percent of the time.



The Storyteller

The Storyteller relates to what the other person is saying by sharing similar stories. Sharing experiences can be a great way to show empathy, that you really "get it." However, if you start telling stories as the listener, it's easy for the speaker to feel that you're more interested in yourself than you are in him.

I am this type of listener ___ percent of the time.

