

LISTENING

LESSON ELEVEN

Follow-up (As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Positive Words.)

1. How are we improving with using positive words instead of negative ones?
2. Can anyone share an experience they've had with positive or negative self-talk?

Concept

Listening is more than just hearing words. It is trying to understand a person's message and their feelings. When we listen, it shows that we care. Careful listening also increases our empathy for people's feelings. Empathy means to mentally put yourself in the other person's place, so you can better understand their thoughts and concerns. Listening with empathy is one of the greatest gifts we can give another person.

When we listen we should:

1. **Show we're listening.** We can do this by facing the person, maintaining eye contact, and having an interested facial expression.
2. **Be interested in what the person is saying and concentrate on their words.**
3. **Never interrupt.**
4. **Watch the speaker's body language.** We all communicate much through our facial expressions, posture, etc.
5. **Actively listen.** We should check if we understand by paraphrasing or repeating what the speaker says occasionally. This lets them know we're listening and interested.
Example: Speaker: "I'm really angry!"
Don't ask why or give advice, just repeat part of what they said.
 Listener: "You're angry?"
 Speaker: "Yea, some kids at school laughed at me."
Again, repeat their comments.
 Listener: "They laughed at you?"
 Speaker: "Yea, I dropped my papers during my history report, and..."
6. **Respond kindly.** When the time is right, we should use empathy as we share our feelings about what has been said, in a way that will help the person.

Listening with love is a virtue we should all desire and seek to acquire. As we listen with open hearts and minds to the messages we hear, we will learn much, and discover how we can best

contribute to the happiness of others.

Family Survey Review

Statement #11. **We listen to each other.**

- Are we good listeners in our family?
- How could we be better?

Story

This is a story that tells how Thomas Edison, a famous American inventor, made a lot of money simply by using his ears instead of his mouth.

When the Western Union Company offered to buy Thomas Edison's newly invented telegraph ticker, Edison had no idea how much to ask for it. He asked for, and was granted, a few days to think about the purchase price.

Edison and his wife talked about the offer. Although stunned by Mrs. Edison's suggestion to ask for \$20,000, he hesitantly agreed and set out to meet Western Union officials.

"What price have you decided on?" the Western Union representative asked.

When Edison attempted to tell him \$20,000, the figure stuck to the roof of his mouth. He stood speechless for a moment. Impatient with the silence, the Western Union business person finally blurted, "How about \$100,000 for the invention?"

Discussion

1. Did it help Thomas Edison to be silent for a moment instead of speaking when the Western Union buyer wanted to make a deal?
2. Why is it a good idea sometimes to listen instead of jumping in to speak?
3. How do we feel when people listen to us?

Activity

For this activity we need one person to be the speaker and one person to be the listener.

First, the speaker will tell the listener something interesting that happened to him, anytime in his life. The listener should use the six listening skills from the lesson:

1. Show you're listening. (Face the person, have eye contact, show interest.)
2. Be interested and concentrate.
3. Don't interrupt.

4. Watch the speaker's body language.
5. Actively listen. (Paraphrase or repeat what the listener says.)
6. Respond kindly.

Second, after the speaker finishes, the two participants switch roles and the listener becomes the speaker.

Assignment

Choose one or more of the following assignments:

1. Be more aware of how you listen to others. Help one another improve your listening skills. Here's an example: If you're speaking to a family member who isn't looking at you, say something like, "I sometimes forget too, but do you remember that we're trying to look at each other when we talk and listen?"
2. Do the activity on the following page: Family Oral History.
3. Read the Additional Solution For Success: Listening.

ACTIVITY

FAMILY ORAL HISTORY

Grandparents, great-grandparents, and older relatives love to talk about their memories. Listening to them helps us understand what their lives were like. It allows us to learn firsthand from their experiences. This is one way to learn why your heritage is so special. In the following activity you'll make a tape recording of older family members to capture the past. The tape can become a cherished family possession.

Activity

1. Arrange in advance to interview someone in your family.
2. Schedule a time and a quiet place for the interview. Be sure to choose a place where you won't be disturbed by other people, or by background noises that would affect the quality of the tape.
4. Make a list of questions you want to ask. Try to create questions which prompt a story, not ones which can be answered with a simple yes or no.

Sample Questions

A. About you

- What were you like when you were my age?
- What did you do for fun?
- Did you ever get into mischief?
- What kinds of toys did you play with as a child?
- Did you have a pet?
- Were your parents strict? Did you ever get angry at them?

- What was it like going to school?
- Where were you born?
- Where did you live? What do you remember the house you grew up in?
- Did your family ever move?
- Did you have brothers and sisters? How did you get along with them?
- Do you think life was easier when you were my age?
- When did you meet Grandma/Grandpa?
- Do you remember your first date? What was he/she like back then?
- Tell me about Mom/Dad when he/she was little.
- What were your parents like? What did they do for a living?
- What were your grandparents like? What did they do?
- How did you celebrate holidays? What foods did you eat?
- Did your family have any traditions? What were they?

B. About the times

- Grandpa, were you in a war? Tell me about it.
- Of all the President's you've known, who do you think was the best? Why?
- What were you doing when you found out President Kennedy had been shot?
- What radio programs did you listen to?
- Do you remember when you bought your first television set?
- Did you watch the first astronauts land on the moon?

C. About me

- When was the first time you ever saw me?
- What was I like when I was a baby?
- Am I like my Mom/Dad when she/he was young?
- What do you think life will be like when I'm your age?
- Do you have any predictions for things you think or hope will happen during my lifetime?

ADDITIONAL SOLUTION FOR SUCCESS

LISTENING

In the manual “Celebrating Family Strengths” researchers at the University of Oklahoma’s Southwest Prevention Center offer valuable information about the skill of listening. They write, “Don’t think all listening is something you do just for others. There are some great payoffs for those who listen.” Benefits for listeners:

5. You gain knowledge. You can learn a great deal of new information about people and about ideas when you listen. This increases understanding of what is meant, as well as of what is said.
6. Listening stimulates the speaker’s expression of ideas and feelings. When you know you are being listened to sincerely and with empathy, you’re encouraged to continue speaking and to express your heartfelt ideas and feelings.
7. You become a trusted person. How many times have we heard the statement, “To have a friend you must be one?” This applies to families, too. When you listen well you are building trust with the speaker, who feels relaxed, comfortable and secure in your attention.
8. Good listening encourages cooperation from others. When you are genuine in your attention, you encourage others to be genuine as well. Sincere interest in your family members often leads to respect and cooperation. This, in turn, can foster a sharing of ideas and a sense of mutual accomplishment.
9. You can reduce tension and prevent trouble. Your careful listening gives the other person a chance to “let off steam” before he or she reaches the boiling point. If you learn to listen carefully before you speak, you often can prevent many minor problems before they become major ones.
10. Listening can be fun. Active listening, or listening with your heart as well as your ears, can increase your enjoyment as a listener. You may actually learn to hear on higher, more positive levels of communication.

Good, effective listening has two key elements:

1. **LISTENING AND OBSERVING.**
2. **LETTING THE SPEAKER KNOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING AND OBSERVING.**

For many people learning to listen is difficult. Society emphasize speaking, and the other end of the communication is often ignored. However, communication is not a one-way street; it requires both speaking and listening.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

LESSON TWELVE

Follow-up *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Listening.)*

1. What have we been doing to listen more carefully?
2. Can someone share an experience of a family member listening to him or her?

Concept

One characteristic of a strong family is communication that is kind, open, frequent and honest. There may be no single thing more important in any relationship than good communication.

Sometimes we expect others to know exactly what we want, or need, even when we say little or nothing at all. Perhaps unkind remarks by others keep us from being open and honest--we're afraid of being hurt or embarrassed. It's very important that family members say only kind, supportive things when someone is sharing their feelings. We should never laugh, or criticize in any way. Instead we should try to understand how the person is feeling, and listen with the intent to help them. When everybody in a family knows they're being listened to and their concerns are being considered, there's a sense of belonging and trust.

It is very important that we communicate openly with one another. When we can say what we really think to supportive family members, good things usually happen:

- We know our family cares about us.
- We believe our opinions and concerns are important.
- Problems are prevented because they are discussed in advance.
- Problems are solved more easily because several people help find solutions.

- Our family is closer and stronger because we help one another.

In our efforts to be open and honest, we should always remember to be kind. In the name of “honesty” sometimes we can easily hurt feelings, and weaken relationships. We should be sensitive to the feelings of others as we speak. In the Disney movie, “Bambi,” the rabbit Thumper gave wonderful advice: “If you can’t say somethin’ nice, don’t say nothin’ at all.”

Family Survey Review

Statement #18. **In our family we can say what we really feel.**

- Can we say what we really feel in our family?
- What are some of the reasons we don’t share our feelings?
- What can we do to help each other “open up?”

Story

One day not long before the end of World War II, a young man in Germany named Reimund saw two airmen parachuting out of an enemy plane that had been shot down. Like many other curious citizens who had seen the parachutists falling through the afternoon sky, 11-year-old Reimund went to the city’s central square to wait for the police to arrive with the prisoners of war. Eventually two policemen arrived with two British prisoners in tow. They would wait in the city square for a car to take the British airmen to a prison where prisoners of war were kept.

When the crowd saw the prisoners, there were angry shouts of “Kill them! Kill them!” No doubt they were thinking of the heavy bombings their city had suffered at the hands of the British. Many of the crowd had come from their fields with pitchforks, shovels and other tools.

Reimund looked at the faces of the British prisoners. They were only 19 or 20 years old. He could see that they were very frightened. He could also see that the two policemen, whose duty it was to protect the prisoners, were no match for the angry crowd.

Reimund knew he had to do something, and he had to do it quickly. He ran to place himself between the prisoners and the crowd. He turned to face the crowd and shouted for them to stop. Not wanting to hurt the boy, the crowd held back for a moment, long enough for Reimund to tell them: “Look at these prisoners. They’re young! They are just like your own sons...they’re only doing what your sons are doing...fighting for their country. If your sons were shot down in a foreign country and became prisoners of war, you wouldn’t want the people there to kill them. So please don’t hurt these soldiers!”

Reimund’s fellow townspeople listened in amazement, then shame. Finally, a woman said, “It took a little boy to tell us what is right and what is wrong.” The crowd dispersed. Reimund will never forget the look of tremendous relief and gratitude on the faces of the young British soldiers.

Discussion

1. If you were Reimund, would you have done the same thing he did?
2. Do we speak up at home, school or work for what we know is right or wrong? If no, why don't we speak up?
3. Can anyone tell about a time when he or she spoke up for what was right?

Activity

Family members will all take turns doing this activity. One person asks a question to another family member. The person who answers the question needs to be completely honest, although kind, in his or her response. The two family members should talk to each other in a very open, totally honest way. Listeners should respond only positively. Try to use the skills which were taught in the lessons on listening and positive words.

1. What is something that happened during the last year which made you happy?
2. What is one thing you dislike about yourself?
3. What is one thing that gets you angry?
4. What is one thing you think our family can do to be happier?
5. What do you think you can do to make our family better?

Assignment

As a family participate in one or both of the following activities: The Talking Box and Correspondence Activities.

ACTIVITY

THE TALKING BOX

Parents and children need to keep the lines of communication open, but sometimes it's hard to get conversations started, especially when there are important matters to discuss. This activity can help your family talk to one another about important issues.

Activity

1. *Set Up*

- Family members prepare the question cards by cutting the questions below from the page and gluing them to index cards. You may want to read the questions ahead of time to see if they are appropriate for the ages of your children. Then put the question cards in the "Talking Box."
- Encourage family members to add more questions.

2. *How To Use The Talking Box*

- Put the box on the table. Everyone chooses a question to talk about during dinner.
- You can take the box on family outings and trips in the car.
- The questions can be discussed during bedtime talks.
- The box can be used when your family visits relatives.

3. *Agree To The Following Rules:*

- Family members may not criticize one another for any comment made during Talking Box discussions.
- If people don't want to answer a question, they may choose another one or pass.
- No one should be pressured into participating in this activity.

Talking Box Questions

For Parents

- What is something you really enjoy about being a parent?
- If you could go back and relive one day from your childhood, which day would it be? Would you do anything differently on that day?

- What is something you have learned about life that you'd like your children to know?
- Describe a time you got really angry at your parents when you were a child.
- What is something you did when you were in high school that you hope your children will not do?
- What do you think it is like having you for a parent?

Questions For Teenagers

- What age would you like to be?
- When you have teenage children of your own, what kind of parent do you think you will be?
- Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "School years are the best years of your life."
- Why do you think some teenagers think it's so cool to do drugs?
- What do you think it is like having you for a son/daughter?

For Elementary School Children

- If you could give parents some serious advice about raising children, what would you tell them?
- What do most children at your school do at recess time?
- What is something you would like to change about your school?
- Why do you think some children are so mean to others?
- Who is your best friend? Why do you like him/her?
- What do you think it is like having you for a son/daughter?

For Very Young Children

- What do you want to be when you are big?
- What would you do if you could stay up all night?
- If you were the Mommy or Daddy in this family, what would you do when the children act naughty?
- What do you think grown-up people do for fun?

Other Questions

- What is something you worry about?
- Describe something that happened recently that made you really happy.
- Describe something people do that makes you really angry.
- If you found out there was going to be an earthquake tomorrow and your family had to move out of your house in a big hurry, what would you want to take with you?

- If somebody gave you \$1000 and said you had to spend some of it on your family before you could buy anything for yourself, what would you buy for everyone?
- If you could live in a different time and place, when and where would you want to live?
- If you could spend an afternoon with a famous person (living or dead) who would you choose and why?
- Do you think it is ever right to tell a lie?
- Why do you think some children run away from home?
- Explain your feelings about divorce.
- What do you think happens to people after death?
- What is something you hope people will remember about you after you die?
- Why do you think some people tell jokes about people who belong to different races, religions, or nationalities?
- Describe something that makes you feel proud to be a member of this family.

ACTIVITY

CORRESPONDENCE ACTIVITIES

Friends and relatives who live in other places enjoy hearing about what's happening in our family. However, sometimes the days and weeks go by so quickly that we don't always stay in touch with our relatives. The two activities below are to help families correspond in creative ways.

Activity

11. Address a large envelope to a relative who lives far away.
12. Keep the envelope in a place that is easy to reach (bulletin board or refrigerator).
13. Fill the envelope with the things that reflect what family members have been doing lately:
 - Completed homework assignments and quizzes
 - Drawings, pages from coloring books, and other "original art"
 - Notes from teachers
 - Programs, agendas, or schedules from meetings, music recitals, concerts, school plays and other events
 - Ticket stubs
 - Newspaper clippings
 - Recipes
 - Photos

If necessary, write a note on items to explain them.

4. After a week, or when the envelope is filled, seal it and mail it to a relative.
14. Address a new envelope to another family member and start again.

The following activity is designed to help your family get into the letter-writing habit, so you can stay close to loved ones.

Activity

15. Assemble the following supplies in a box: paper, pens, pencils, envelopes, stamps.
16. Talk to your family about why it is important to write to friends and relatives.
17. Explain that any time someone has a letter to write, all the supplies can be found in one place. Always keep the writing supplies in the box so you won't have to hunt for them.
18. Consider setting aside half an hour each month for a family "write-in." Everybody