

Reflections: Communication Practice

Using a technique called reflection can quickly help you become a better listener. When reflecting, you will repeat back what someone has just said to you, but in your own words. This shows that you didn't just hear the other person, but you are trying to understand them.

Reflecting what another person says can feel funny at first. You might think the other person will be annoyed at you for repeating them. However, when used correctly, reflections receive a positive reaction and drive a conversation forward.

Here's an example:

Speaker: "I get so angry when you spend so much money without telling me. We're trying to save for a house!"

Listener: "We're working hard to save for a house, so it's really frustrating when it seems like I don't care."

Quick Tips

The tone of voice you use for reflections is important. Use a tone that comes across as a statement, with a bit of uncertainty. Your goal is to express: "I think this is what you're telling me, but correct me if I'm wrong." Your reflections don't have to be perfect. If the other person corrects you, that's good! Now you have a better understanding of what they're trying to say.

Try to reflect emotions, even if the person you're listening to didn't clearly describe them. You may be able to pick up on how they feel by their tone of voice or body language. Switch up your phrasing, or your reflections will start to sound forced.

Try some of these:

- "I hear you saying that..."
- "It sounds like you feel..."
- "You're telling me that..."

Focus on reflecting the main point. Don't worry too much about all the little details, especially if the speaker had a lot to say.

Practice

"I was in a bad mood yesterday because work has been so stressful. I just can't keep up with everything I have to do."

Reflection:

"I feel like I'm doing all of the work around the house. I need you to help me clean

and do the dishes more often."

Reflection:

"I've been worried when you don't answer your phone. I always think something might've happened to you."

Reflection:

"I don't understand what she wants from me. First she says she wants one thing, then another."

Reflection: