

Speaking to Influence:

“Listening To Influence” Steps

(Consider giving both/all participants a copy of these guidelines before or at the start of your conversation)

1. Remind yourself: the goal is listening to *understand*, not listening to *win*. Seek to truly understand the other person’s concerns, priorities, pressures and needs. If both people successfully listen to understand each other, both people win.
2. Establish safety. Ensure the other person that there will be no retaliation if you don’t like something they share. What matters most is getting to the real root of the problem.
3. Once you’ve established the purpose of the conversation, invite the other person to talk first.
4. Have paper and pens for each person to take notes while the other person is talking. Taking notes on computer can tempt people to secretly “multitask.” Writing on paper ensures transparency, and can be scanned later if needed. Note taking helps you to:
 - a. Remember what the other person said
 - b. Organize, revise, and prioritize thoughts before you share them
 - c. Refrain from interrupting, since there’s no concern that you’ll forget what you wanted to say. Only interrupt to request immediately necessary clarification, or to gently guide tangents back on track.
5. Once they have shared their perspective, mirror back what you heard them say. Use reporting language, and avoid interpretation or judgment. Stay neutral in word choice, voice and body language. Let the other person correct your understanding as necessary.
6. Acknowledge and validate as many of his points or feelings as possible.
7. Change roles. Ask the other person to take notes and listen to understand as you share some additional information.
8. Remind them to: (a) refrain from interrupting, (b) mirror using neutral reporting language, (c) ask them acknowledge validity in something you’ve shared.
9. Repeat the process as necessary to reveal all crucial information to get to the best possible outcome while maintaining mutual respect and strengthening all relationships in the process.