

Habit #5

Seek First to Understand,
Then to Be Understood

Brief Information about Habit #5

- Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood means that it is better to listen first and talk second
- By taking the time to listen to another person, you reach a higher level of communication

Brief Information about Habit #5

- Teaching Habit #5 to young children is done by first considering their age and development
- Young children find it difficult to understand another's point of view.
- This habit is best approached by introducing listening as a skill that should be practiced
- Learning to listen without interrupting will help children build a foundation for habit 5

Younger-Child Activities

- To better understand how listening can help or hurt a relationship, try “pretend listening” with your child for a few minutes. Your child will be frustrated. Explain what you are doing and discuss how your child felt. Now how your child ignore you when you are talking. Discuss how it makes you feel when you are ignored. Finish the discussion by thinking of ways to let the other person know when you feel you are not being truly listened to. Remind your child that this is also an example of Think Win-Win.

Younger- Child Activities

- Body Language can be even more important than words. Play a game with your kids where you each try to guess the other's emotions (happy, sad, angry, frustrated, bored, etc.) without using any words, just body language
- Demonstrate how saying the same phrase in a different tone of voice can give the phrase a completely different meaning.

Primary- Age Children's Reading List – Habit #5

- **The Runaway Bunny-** Margaret Wise Brown
- **The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!-** Jon Scieszka
- **Stellaluna-** Janel Cannon
- **Jamaica's Find-** Juanita Havill
- **Alejandro's Gift-** Richard E. Albert

Teen Activities

- Ask yourself what your biggest listening problem is. Do you “pretend listen”? Do you only listen to give advice or judge? Do you plan what you are going to say instead of really listening? Work to improve your listening skills and model good listening behaviour.
- Consider asking your teen to let you know when he or she feels you aren't listening. When it happens, thank him or her, listen, and share back and forth until your teen feels understood.

Teen Activities

- Is there an issue you and your teen always argue about? If so, go to your teen and say, “Help me understand your point of view”. Then really listen without interruptions. When your child is finished, repeat in your own words what you heard until he or she acknowledges feeling understood. Then it’s your turn to speak and your child’s turn to listen.

Upper- Age Children's Reading List- Habit #5

- **Marrying Malcolm Murgatroyd-** Mame Farrell
- **Witch of Blackbird Pond-** Elizabeth George Speare
- **Rules-** Cynthia Lord
- **Veronica Knows Best-** Nancy Robinson
- **The Bully of Barkham Street-** Mary Stolz