



Active Listening Guide

Why it Matters

When someone on your team opens up, the way you respond shapes whether they'll ever do it again.

- ✓ Builds trust and psychological safety
- ✓ Helps prevent disengagement and silent burnout
- ✓ Increases employee retention

The 5 Habits of Active Listening

	Give Your Full Attention Your presence is the message. If you're distracted, they'll shut down before they start.	✓ Close your laptop ✓ Silence your phone ✓ Look them in the eyes
	Let Them Talk Let them talk at least 80% of the time (the 80/20 rule). Silence is often when the real stuff shows up.	✓ Don't interrupt ✓ Stay quiet — even through long pauses ✓ Don't rush to reassure or solve
	Body Language Your body language matters more than what you say. Stay physically open and emotionally neutral.	✓ Nod gently and stay relaxed ✓ Avoid defensive postures ✓ Don't roll your eyes
	Ask Questions Ask open-ended questions to clarify what you don't understand — but don't interrogate.	Try: <i>"Can you say a little more about that?" · "What's been the hardest part lately?" · "Do you want to unpack that?"</i>
	Repeat It Back Summarizing what you heard in your own words — not theirs — shows you're listening.	<i>"So what I'm hearing is..." — then pause and let them confirm or correct.</i>

