Active Listening

Answer Key

ACTIVE LISTENING

Response Exercise

DIRECTIONS: The following are common responses listeners give.

a. responding by asking questions (example - Speaker: "I don't know what is wrong. He got a call and now he won't speak to me." Listener: "How long has he been that way?")

b. responding by making judgements (example - Speaker: "I think I will quit my job." Listener: "I don't think you should do that. You might never find another.")

c. responding with advice (example - Speaker: "No one is interested in me. I am boring." Listener: "You seem interesting to me. Maybe you could try to take up a hobby."

Read each of the following statements and the list of responses. Mark them Q for question response; J for judgment response; A for advice response; and AL for active listening response.

A. If my brother had done that, my dad wouldn't have asked a question. It's always been like that.

Q 1. How do you feel about it?
J 2. You and your brother never did get along.
AL 3. You feel your dad has always discriminated against you and you resent it.
J 4. Boy, you sure have it pegged each time. Your brother gets away with everything.
J 5. I bet your dad had a good reason. They usually do.
B. There was a general lay off yesterday at the plant. I was fired after all those years. I have no idea what to do.

Q 1. What plant is it?
J 2. You just can’t believe this could happen.
J 3. I’ll bet you feel bewildered.
J 4. You didn’t do something? What do you think it was?
AL 5. You’ve had steady employment all these years and now you are jobless and confused.

C. I don’t have any friends. I know so few people. I try not to care. People just aren’t dependable, everyone is out for himself/herself.

AL 1. You have a hard time being yourself around people, so you act like you don’t care.
J 2. Maybe not wanting friends is hiding deeper emotions.
A 3. It’s tough when you don’t have friends. I would sure get to work and do something about it.
A 4. Listen, here’s what to do! Join this health club. You will meet lots of people.
AL 5. You want to have a real friend and you are not sure where to get started.

D. I can’t face it.

J 1. It appears to be an impossible task and you feel threatened.
A 2. I’m sure it will be difficult, but I know you can do it.
A 3. Try it. It won’t be so bad.
Q 4. Give me the reason you don’t think you can face it.
AL 5. It is a situation you have to deal with, but can’t.

E. I have never met anyone like her. I thought I knew dynamic women before, but this is the real thing. She is pretty and bright and talented.

Q 1. How does she compare to other women?
J 2. You sure have some superficial reasons for liking her.
J 3. Boy are you excited about this woman.
AL 4. You are proud to be with her and feel great about yourself.
J 5. You do this every time you meet a new woman.