

Pondering Point

There are times when both people are on the same page and understand each other perfectly. For all other times, it is important to ensure that our message is heard the way we intended to deliver it. Not being on the same page can be frustrating and hinder progress.

Paraphrasing is one of the key parts of Active Listening. Restating the message can help clarify information that was heard and preserves the essential meaning. Keep all communication as simple as possible and check with the listener to ensure they are following along. Providing a brief history may give the listener information they will need to fully understand what we are saying.

A close relationship with someone doesn't always guarantee they understand us at all times. *Are we assuming they are in the same emotional state and headspace that we are?* What we are trying to say might be confusing. Paraphrasing with people we don't know well is important because we have not learned how the other person receives information. It is respectful to the speaker to have their message understood, just as the speaker must be respectful of the listener and not assume they are on the same page.

Do you HEAR what I hear?

How do you know for sure?



Imagine... following the story better because everyone is on the same page.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity

Practice paraphrasing at the dinner table – in a meeting – anytime!

Try This – Engaged Paraphrasing

- Repeat key points to build dialogue during the conversation. Begin with phrases such as:
 - *What I am hearing you say is...*
 - *If I understand correctly, you need...*
- Empathize and show compassion during emotional aspects of the conversation.
 - *I am sorry to hear about...*
- In closing the conversation, summarize the information back to the speaker.
- As a final step, encourage feedback to gain confirmation.
 - You may want to ask the person to repeat important information to ensure you are on the same page.

It may feel clumsy at first but will get smoother over time!

Self Reflection

Think back to friends, mentors, counselors, or family members who have had the biggest impact on you.

- Who do we know that has been great at getting their message across?
 - Why did I hear it so well?
- How would I characterize their communication?

“I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”

- Robert McCloskey