

Work and Family

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COMMUNIQUE

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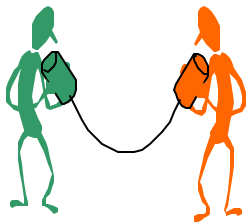
March 17 – St. Patrick's Day
March 21 – First Day of Spring



Become an Active Listener

When you actively listen to people, you take the time to really understand what they are saying. If the speaker feels that you're really listening, he or she will feel more positive about you and the situation. Because listening helps people feel better about each other, it helps build stronger relationships. It also cuts down on misunderstandings and resulting stress. Active listening is a skill that will make you a better communicator. The better you listen and understand, the more successful you will be. Active listening helps you understand others, wins you respect, and gives you more power. Some ideas that may work are:

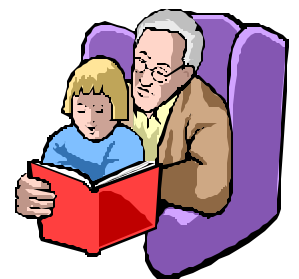
- Listen to the total message. Up to 65% of a message is sent without words so be aware of body language.
- Avoid letting your own emotions and opinions color the message.
- Prepare physically for the conversation. Show your interest by facing the speaker, making sure you can hear what they are saying, and maintaining eye contact.
- Focus on the message, not the speaker's appearance and delivery.
- Try to avoid having the last word. If you listen closely, you may be convinced that the speaker is right after all.



- Mentally summarize what is being said as you listen. Take advantage of the fact that we can think about four times faster than the average person can speak. Try to sort out and remember what you can use.
- Evaluate what you hear. Don't accept everything at face value.
- Practice the following three skills:
 - Paraphrasing: repeat back in your own words what you think the speaker has said.
 - Clarifying: ask questions to get more information about the topic. "Tell me more about..."
 - Feedback: share your understanding of what the speaker said. "It sounds like..."

Assessing Elder Care Needs

A critical aspect of caring for an older person is being able to determine what the person's needs are and how best to respond to those needs. This is especially important when you live in another city and do not have contact with the family member on a day-to-day basis. Needs can range from 24-hour skilled nursing care to the need for social contact or legal counseling. In most cases an older person's needs or problems can be solved through community-sponsored programs. You may want to conduct an informal assessment of the older person's ability to function independently through simple observations and by asking general questions. Be careful, though: You don't want to come across as nosy and overly inquisitive. It is best when older adults



share their difficulties and needs, rather than being *told* what they need. If you answer “no” to any of the following questions, these areas may need your attention. Based on your answers, you can share your observations and concerns with your relatives and begin to identify options together that may meet the elder’s needs.

(1) [Y – or – N] The person is able to move freely and safely in their surroundings.

(2) [Y – or – N] The person has had no deterioration in physical or mental ability to perform day-to-day chores over the last six months, and doesn’t need greater outside assistance.

(3) [Y – or – N] The person has the ability to independently perform basic activities of daily living such as eating, getting in or out of a chair or bed, dressing, bathing, grooming, and using the toilet.

(4) [Y – or – N] The person’s residence has stayed clean and in good repair.

(5) [Y – or – N] The person is able to manage basic finances such as making deposits, paying bills, and managing expenses.

(6) [Y – or – N] If the person is under medical care, they are able to take medications as directed and follow treatment procedures.

(7) [Y – or – N] The person is able to drive safely or use public transportation.

(8) [Y – or – N] The person’s general attitude toward life has remained positive.

Give Them A Chance To Shine

Every child has special talents or skills. When you share your child’s enthusiasm and show that you’re impressed with their gifts, you turn up their self-esteem another notch. Discover each of your children’s special gifts: Numbers? Drawing? Reading? Problem solving? Singing? Dancing? Then let them show off their skills for you in creative ways. If your child loves books, have them read to you while you cook or drive. If your daughter is good with



numbers, let her help you find the best buys when you go shopping or figure out your change at the checkout. If there is drawing talent lurking inside your son, have him make place cards for the holiday table.

Family Traditions

Family rituals – big and small – can help your household develop a sense of unity, identity and comfort that will follow your children all their lives. Holidays like Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas come ready-made with rituals that you can adopt and embellish. But activities as simple as a family movie night, set mealtimes with “mandatory” attendance or board games every Friday night can become family traditions. The key is consistency – make these customs part of the fabric of your household and hold them as a sacred aspect of your weekly routines or holiday celebrations. To create your own family traditions, think about what values you want to pass along to your children. If it’s a love of literature, make reading before bed a nightly ritual. If it’s the importance of togetherness, reserve a regular day and time that’s a must for everyone’s participation. If it’s a love of the outdoors, take an annual camping trip. The possibilities are endless. And even if your children do not grow up to share your passions, they will always appreciate the passion you showed for your family.



Chess Without Borders

Want to play chess with someone from India at 1:00am? Instantchess.com randomly pairs you with global opponents and posts flags to identify nationalities. Click and drag pieces to move – before the 15-minute timer goes off. Your first 64 matches are free. Then \$32 buys you unlimited games.

