KILLING US SOFTLY 3
ADVERTISING’S IMAGE OF WOMEN | FEATURING JEAN KILBOURNE
TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING*

Active listening is an important skill that takes both time and practice to acquire. It is an essential component of productive discussions because it allows for the respectful exchange of ideas. This handout will help you to understand and practice the skill.

» **Listen** in order to fully understand what is being said to you.
» **Rephrase** what you heard the person say so you can be sure you heard correctly.
» **Ask questions** that help you get more information. For example, “What did you mean when you said…?”
» **Offer encouragement and support.**
» **Ask how the person feels.** Be careful not to assume that you know how the person feels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION BLOCKERS</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blaming and attacking.</td>
<td>Asking for more information and problem solving together.</td>
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<td>Being distracted or using other body language that is non-attentive.</td>
<td>Making eye contact, leaning toward the other person, giving full attention.</td>
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<td>Dismissing or making light of someone’s problem.</td>
<td>Showing empathy, validating the other person’s feelings.</td>
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<td>Interrupting.</td>
<td>Staying silent until the person is finished speaking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturing/moralizing.</td>
<td>Withholding judgment.</td>
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<td>“Yes…but” statements.</td>
<td>“Yes…and” statements.</td>
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</table>

1. If a woman voices a strong opinion about a woman’s rights issue, I tend to (*check all that apply)*:
   - Listen
   - Get annoyed
   - Feel intimidated
   - Get angry
   - Feel inspired
   - Ignore her
   - Other ________

2. I would use the following terms to describe a woman with a strong opinion about a women’s rights issue (*check all that apply)*:
   - Strong
   - Empowered
   - Bitch
   - Lesbian
   - Feminist
   - Respectable
   - Inspiring
   - Human
   - Irritating
   - Man-hater

3. A feminist is (*check all that apply)*:
   - A woman who doesn’t like most men
   - A woman who believes that women are better than men
   - A person who believes in equal rights and opportunities for both men and women
   - A woman who doesn’t shave her legs
   - A lesbian
   - A woman who works for equal rights and opportunities for both men and women
   - A person who supports abortion
   - A person who works for affordable daycare
   - A person who works against sexual harassment
   - A woman who doesn’t respect married stay-at-home moms

4. What is your impression of feminists?
   - Favorable
   - Unfavorable

5. Is feminism today relevant to most women?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Is feminism relevant to you personally?
   - Yes
   - No
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1. In what ways do you fulfill society’s expectations of gender? Examine your reasons for fulfilling these expectations and how you feel about them? What expectations do you not fulfill? Examine these reasons and how you feel about them?

2. Spend a free period observing the interactions of your classmates around campus. What inferences can you make about gender from your observations? How do your observations tie into the articles/conversations from class?

3. Have you ever felt limited by your gender? Explain.

4. Have you ever felt that your gender allowed you to do something that the opposite gender would not permit you to do? Explain.

5. Write a letter to an adult of your same gender whom you admire. Tell this person what s/he means to you, how s/he has touched your life and what you admire about him/her… Write from your heart and be expressive. Paste an envelope into your journal and place the letter in the envelope. (Do not seal the envelope.)

6. Choose a peer of your own gender whom you admire (whom you may or may not know personally). Write him/her a letter explaining why you admire him/her. Put the letter in an unsealed envelope and paste it into your journal.

7. Same activity as #6, but write to a peer of the opposite gender.

8. Personify your gender and write a letter to it, asking questions and expressing feelings… (ex. Dear Womanhood, Often I have felt unaccepted by you… OR Dear Womanhood, You have given me many gifts and powers that I cherish… OR Dear Manhood, Sometimes you have been demanding…).
CREATE YOUR OWN MAGAZINE

You will need to:

» Choose a subject/audience (are you going to create a Sports magazine? a Fashion magazine? a Parenting magazine? etc.?)

» Give you magazine a name – be original and creative!

» Identify the messages that you want to send about gender. *(i.e. Current fashion magazines send the message that being female involves striving for ‘ideal’ physical beauty.)* What message(s) do you want to send about beauty? strength? etc.?

» Identity the assumptions that underlie the messages you want to send. Create visual images and articles that accurately work off these assumptions.

» Design advertisements that send these messages. Your ads should be completely original creations. You will need to take all photographs or create drawings that are used in the visual image. You will also need to create slogans and develop the idea behind the advertisement on your own. **Do not copy already existing advertisements.** You may, however, devise advertisements for already existing products and brands. You’re encouraged to make up your own brands.

» Write articles, columns, and/or editorials that convey messages about gender, either directly or indirectly. *(i.e. an article about males and eating disorders addresses gender directly while an article about the CEO of a Fortune 500 company who happens to be a woman addresses it indirectly.)*

After creating your magazine, write a reflection which answers:

» What were your intentions for the articles you wrote? How well did you accomplish your intentions?

» What were your intentions for the advertisements you created? How well did you accomplish your intentions?

» What did you learn through the creation of this magazine?

» How does your magazine represent what you understand about the media?