Principles of Effective Listening

1. **Stop talking.**
   Don’t talk, just listen. Don’t interrupt, talk over them, impose your solutions, or finish their sentences. Only ask questions for clarification and understanding.

2. **Relax and focus on the speaker.**
   Put other things out of your mind and concentrate on the messages being communicated.

3. **Put the speaker at ease.**
   Face them, maintain normal eye contact, smile, and nod or use other gestures to encourage them to continue.

4. **Eliminate distractions.**
   Don’t answer emails, doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, text, etc. Avoid interruptions.

5. **Empathize.**
   Try to understand their point of view.

6. **Be patient.**
   Let them continue at their own pace.

7. **Keep an open mind.**
   Don’t judge. Avoid personal prejudice and biases. Be impartial. Don’t become distracted by a person’s accent, speech pattern, habits, or mannerisms.

8. **Listen for ideas, not just words.**
   Get the whole picture. Try to picture what the speaker is saying.

9. **Listen for paralanguage:**
   tone, rate, pitch, volume, emphasis.

10. **Watch non-verbal cues –**
    posture, stance, gestures, facial expressions, eye movement.