

On-listening

[\[Audio Link\]](#)

Probably one of the most important and potentially underrated skills that we really hope to refine in ourselves as peacemakers is listening skills. And it's important to listen not only so that you're truly gleaning the information and the potential discussion points that someone is trying to present to you, but also portraying yourself physically to let the other individual or individuals know that you are indeed listening.

So much of what we do in communication has nothing to do with the words that we're saying and everything to do with our body language, whether it's intentional or not. So, part of being a good peacemaker is being an active listener, you know, leaning in, making eye contact, at least in American traditional culture, asking clarifying questions, nodding occasionally, things that the person who is speaking really gets the connotation in not only your response but your physicality, that you are present to them and you care about what it is they're talking about.

And the other thing to bear in mind too, is a lot of times when we're doing actual peace teamwork and we know that there are people who are going to be potentially conflictual or have issues with, say, what's happening in any given scene, a lot of times what we're thinking is, "What should I say to deescalate the situation? What words should I use that will be most effective?"

And we forget what is my body saying without my words even talking? If I say that I care about somebody, but I'm not looking at them, I'm not approaching them, I have my body language where it looks like, you know, my arms are crossed or I'm checking my watch or I'm following a bird across the sky, all of which are indicative of not paying attention, it doesn't matter what words I use. So, a part of our job as good peacemakers is making sure that our body is conveying that we care as well.

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