



TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOOD LISTENING



1. **STOP TALKING**
You cannot listen if you are talking. Wait; your turn will come.
2. **PUT THE TALKER AT EASE**
Help him/her feel that he/she is free to talk. This is often called a “permissive, safe environment.”
3. **SHOW HIM/HER THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN**
Look and act interested. Listen to understand, rather than to reply.
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS**
Don’t doodle, tap, read or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door or turn down the radio?
5. **EMPATHIZE WITH HIM/HER**
Try to put yourself in his/her place so that you can see his/her point of view.
6. **BE PATIENT**
Allow plenty of time. Don’t interrupt. Don’t start for the door, or walk away, or make hand signals to hurry them along.
7. **HOLD YOUR TEMPER**
An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words and the anger inhibits active listening.
8. **GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM**
This puts the talker on the defensive. He/she may “clam up” and get angry. Don’t argue: if you win, you lose, since they were unable to tell you their feelings and you learn nothing.
9. **ASK QUESTIONS**
This encourages him/her to expand his/her thoughts and shows you are listening. It helps them to develop points further.
10. **STOP TALKING!**
This is the first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. You just can’t do a good job of listening while you are talking.

**NATURE GAVE US TWO EARS, BUT ONLY ONE TONGUE,
WHICH IS A GENTLY REMINDER THAT WE SHOULD LISTEN
MORE THAN WE TALK!**

Fostering an Optimistic Outlook

While people tend toward being optimistic or pessimistic, optimism can be learned and practiced.

Being hopeful makes life under stress more bearable.

Hope can comfort and heal.

Having a hopeful outlook is believing that if one door to the future is closed, another door will open.





STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE HOPE

Hope and optimism are yours to manage and control. There are many ways to maintain hope that are listed below. Identify the strategies that will work the best for you and practice them regularly.

■ INVOLVING OTHERS

Surround yourself with others who are hopeful. HOPE IS CONTAGIOUS (so is hopelessness). Seek out people who believe in you and your ability to overcome difficulties.

Permit friends and family to help you with chores, meals and errands so you can save your energy for feeling better.

Remind family and friends involved in your life that you need to keep as much control as possible over daily decisions. Ask them to present you with choices rather than making decisions for you.

■ IMPROVING YOUR ATTITUDE

Look for silver linings. You have control over how you view the world and your situation. Identify positive things that may come from negative situations. This is not meant to deny unpleasant feelings, but is a way to begin to work through them.

Think positively to help build faith in yourself. Remember past accomplishments, particularly your strengths that got you through previous cancer treatments or other difficult experiences. Surround yourself with uplifting messages (like posters, pictures, magnets, hand-written notes) to inspire you to think positively.

Avoid getting stuck in self-pity. Remind yourself that cancer is a very common disease, not an unfair punishment. Currently,, there are over 9 million cancer survivors in the U.S. You are not alone.

Remind yourself that some changes and sacrifices are worthwhile if the treatment makes you better or lengthens your survival. Some cancer patients hope for an extended remission if cure is not possible.

■ **HANDLING YOUR EMOTIONS**

Talk about your feelings. Attend support groups or get emotional support from others with whom you are close. Keep a diary or audio tape of your experiences and feelings.

Remember that unpleasant feelings such as anger, fear, and disappointment are normal and expected. Look for safe and healthy ways to relieve bad feelings. Feeling hopeless at times is also normal. Hope and hopelessness can both be present when a family is facing cancer.

Practice letting go of worrying about what could happen in the future so that these fears do not prevent you from enjoying today.

Talk to a mental health professional to help you adjust to living with cancer, especially if you are experiencing a reaction like depression.

■ **FINDING ACTIVITIES THAT FOSTER HOPE**

Participate in activities that bring comfort or promote hope such as praying, meditating, visiting with clergy, listening to uplifting music, or reading inspirational books. Continue hobbies that you have enjoyed in the past or start a new hobby that has always interested you. Make adjustments if you have physical limitations: hike a simple trail instead of a mountain trail; “garden” plants indoors, watch golf or tennis on television.

Try to do activities that keep you from feeling like your life is totally taken up by cancer. It is VERY IMPORTANT to choose your activities wisely and pace yourself. Some activities will increase your energy, others may drain it. Strive for a balance of keeping active, but getting the rest you need.

Set aside time each day to do things that will decrease stress such as deep breathing, head-to-toe relaxation, meditation, etc. Many books and tapes are available to teach you how. Find one that appeals to you. Avoid unhealthy ways of dealing with stress such as misusing alcohol and drugs, overeating, or avoiding activities and people.

Practice a healthy lifestyle: eat a balanced diet, exercise, get enough sleep and arrange for rest periods during the day.

Seek physical comforts such as closeness to someone dear, touches, hugs, massages, or warm bubble baths.

Find activities that make you laugh (books, movies, playing with children or pets). Humor can be very helpful.

Make time to be involved with someone or something outside of yourself: family, friends, pets, plants, or hobbies.

Focus on small joys that are reason for celebration: the brilliant colors of fall, a soft puppy, birds singing, the taste of a favorite food, the warmth of the sun, the smell of a favorite perfume, or watching a sunset.

■ CONCLUSIONS

Identify your sources of hope (spiritual beliefs, family, inner self, humor, etc.) and use them to look at your world more positively. Perhaps most importantly, **LIVE IN THE PRESENT**. Try to appreciate every moment and every day you have.



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