

ACTIVE LISTENING PAIR WORK

10 Minute Warm-Up

Active Listening

for better

Communication Skills

Community Building

Madeleine Mitchell

FYS Senior Teaching Professor

- **Active Listening** (2 minutes of just listening followed by 2 minutes of back and forth dialogue – Time them!) Each person in pair takes a turn. Follow activity with class debrief/comments. How was it? Did you notice impulses to distract from 100% attention? Is this a valuable exercise? Do you want to do it again?
- **Give 100% full attention!** Don't think about what YOU will say next.
- **Stay curious!** Follow up questions will come naturally after the listening period.
- **Don't make it about you!** Avoid the well-intentioned impulse to immediately relate it back to yourself: "Oh, that happened to me, too." This prevents the speaker from telling their full story how they want it to be told. Keep the focus entirely on the person you are listening to. Don't derail their train of thought.

Examples of student-recommended questions to use for Active Listening.

(Be sure to remind students that they should share only at the depth they are comfortable with. They should think of three talking points in their response to help fill the full 2 minutes.)

- What or who inspires you? Why?
- Describe a "people" conflict you are currently experiencing. How are you dealing with it?
- What is something that you are currently doing very well?
- What is one thing you are struggling with?
- Describe a time when you stepped outside your comfort zone. What happened?