



COMMUNICATION- EFFECTIVE LISTENING

CONTEXT: Children frequently encounter social challenges, such as feeling excluded or hurt by friends. A parent's response in these moments plays a crucial role in helping the child learn how to process these situations.

OBJECTIVES: In this session, parents will focus on:

1. The significance of active listening, going beyond merely hearing, and offering full attention with love, respect, and empathy.
2. Developing patience, understanding, and sensitivity to both verbal and nonverbal cues to deepen the connection with their children.
3. How listening without judgment builds trust, strengthens relationships, and boosts confidence in both parents and children.

SCENARIO: Riya (mother), Mayank (son)

Mayank trudged through the front door; his face downcast. He dropped his school bag and lunch bag carelessly by the door, the thud echoing through the quiet house. Riya, his mother, glanced up from the kitchen, noticing his unusual silence.

Riya: Hey, Mayank, how was school?

[He didn't respond immediately. Instead, he walked past her, heading toward the couch, his shoulders slumped. Riya's eyes moved to his lunch bag, still full and untouched. Riya felt a flicker of frustration rise inside her, but she took a deep breath, trying to keep her composure. She didn't want to snap at him, especially when she wasn't sure what had happened. Slowly, she sat beside him on the couch, giving him the space to process. The silence between them stretched, but Riya didn't push him. She let him be, hoping he would open up when he was ready]

Riya (after a few minutes): I'm here, Mayank, if you'd like to talk."

Mayank hesitated, his eyes still on the floor, and then, with a deep breath, he began to speak. "It's just... my friends. They made plans to hang out after school, and they didn't even tell me. I felt... left out."

Riya nodded gently, her heart aching as she listened. She didn't interrupt him, just sat there, giving him her full attention. After a long pause, she spoke, her tone soft but understanding.

"That must have been really hard for you," she said, her voice quiet but sincere.

Mayank looked up at her, his eyes a little moist. "Yeah. It made me feel like I don't matter."



Instead of rushing to offer advice or solutions, Riya thought for a moment before asking, “What do you think might help you feel better?”

Mayank furrowed his brow, thinking. After a few seconds, a small smile began to form on his face. “Maybe I could invite them over to our house sometime. We could hang out together... just the four of us.”

Riya’s smile widened as she nodded in approval. “That’s a great idea. How about we plan something fun? Maybe a game night or a movie marathon?”

Mayank’s face brightened, and for the first time that day, his shoulders seemed to relax. “Yeah! That sounds awesome.”

[Mayank felt a sense of relief wash over him. His mother had listened without judgment, acknowledged his feelings, and helped him come up with a solution. He felt heard, valued, and more confident in handling his emotions.]

"Thanks, Mom," he whispered, feeling a little lighter.

SWAMI SAYS ...

...There is a language of the heart, which all can understand and all would like to hear. That is the language which I speak, the language that goes from My heart to yours. When heart speaks to heart, it is love that is transmitted, without any reservation. The responsive heart listens to these with sympathy and answers with love.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did Riya’s patience and nonjudgmental approach influence Mayank’s openness to share?
2. How do you validate your child's feelings while helping them?
3. How might the conversation have unfolded if Riya had offered advice or dismissed Mayank’s feelings right away?
4. What challenges do you face when trying to maintain patience during emotional moments with your child? List two. (*Facilitator to give everyone a piece of paper*).

WRAPPING UP ...

- Facilitator to summarize the highlights from discussions as well as individual reflections [Brief takeaway by facilitator.]



- Reflections- request attendees to share anything that was interesting or intriguing or inspiring. Reflective prompt: *Let's go around and quickly hear from everyone in one or two words, your takeaway from today's Parenting session.*
- Commitment- As parents, let us commit to practicing active listening with love, respect, and empathy, validating our child's feelings without judgment, and fostering trust, open communication, and resilience in navigating life's challenges.