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Listening to Understand The Massage Therapist's Guidebook

By Diane Matkowski

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"Your ability to communicate is an important tool in your pursuit of your goals, whether it is with your family, your co-workers or your clients and customers."

Les Brown

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I challenge massage therapists. I mentor to listen more than they speak. You will build more solid relationships by listening and asking questions than by talking. Some new massage therapists listen so that they can respond. It's as if they feel they need to prove something. Oftentimes they miss a client's potential to spell out the issue they came to resolve, or they miss getting the information necessary to give clients their perfect massage. People want to be heard.

The sole purpose of truly listening is to understand

Listening creates a pause and also shows a fellow human an enormous amount of care, respect, and support. You are more likely to connect with clients during sessions if they first feel heard.

Overlooking someone's need to be heard denies them a comfort required to build a successful business relationship. Standing back and observing is sometimes more powerful than having a lot to say.

Listening means being fully present, using all five of your senses, and coming

from a place of wanting to authentically learn about someone else. You are not figuring out the person, replaying last night's fight with a friend, wondering what you are going to do after work, or thinking of a brilliant response. Your undivided attention is on listening to what the other is saying. Focus on the client and in your sessions quietly change the world one body at a time.

After someone is done talking, repeat back to them what you heard with similar vocabulary and in a gentle tone. You can use this technique in all your relationships. It helps two people make sure there is clear communication. Sometimes when you repeat back what you think you heard, a person will correct you or add more information. The process of repeating back helps fewer miscommunications to occur.

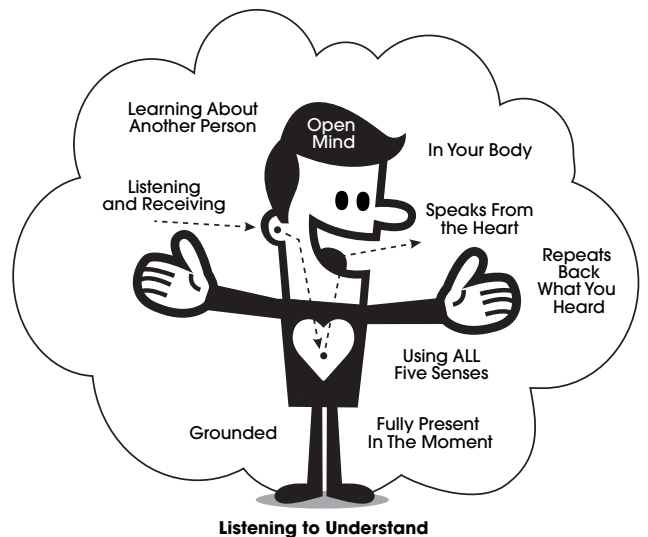
After you carefully listen, repeat back, and are clear on the session the client requested—you must provide it! A client who walks away feeling heard is the best

gift you can give them, the entire massage community, and your massage practice.

The respect you build with your clients has a direct effect on the massage community in its entirety. The best interactions are when a client leaves feeling like they received the session they requested. Listening is the gateway to understanding, building solid relationships, and excelling in all areas of your life and profession.

The more you listen, the better you will get, and the more you will see the benefits of being open to other people's words. When you are talking, you are sharing knowledge you already have obtained.

When you listen, the possibilities to receive and learn are endless. Many times, people pass by and ask, "How are you?" but don't wait for the answer. Questions have become gestures, and the power of listening is left behind.



Listening creates a pause and also shows a fellow human an enormous amount of care



Diane Matkowski has been practicing massage for more than twenty years. Her massage business is a five-time award-winning establishment. Diane maintains a staff of ten, and together they have served more than twelve thousand people in the community. She has established Freedom Technique Bodywork classes

and is a continuing education provider in the US. She also has written a book *The Massage Therapist's Guidebook* approved by NCBTMB as a home study course.

Learn more at www.freedommassage.com

