

LISTEN
and you will
LIVE



COMMUNICATION & LISTENING

FRANCES ACOSTA

“Listen, and you will live.” “Incline the ear of your heart.” The words of St. Francis of Assisi in his *Letter to the Entire Order* are an invitation to listen to Christ, “true Wisdom of the Father” (2LtF 67), the invitation *to listen* is the way of salvation, the Word calling us both to physical listening and to obedient interior listening — the journey of the disciple called to *incline the ear of the heart*. This way, when undertaken by each Secular and Fraternity, leads us to *live* the Gospel, praising God and witnessing to him in word and deed.

Our Rule tells us that part of our commitment to the Secular Franciscan Order includes the responsibility to communicate with one another when there are problems. We also can avoid problems by learning how to communicate effectively with one another in good times and bad!

Truly effective communication begins not with speaking, but with actively listening to what others have to say. Although you may be eager to express your point of view, adopting a “listen-first” approach reduces misunderstandings, shows that you care about others and helps you make better decisions.

Like anything else, listening requires practice. To get you started, here are a few techniques that can help you become a more active listener:

COMMUNICATION & ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Do not presume that others can read your mind.
2. If you have a need, say so—to people who can help.
3. If you have been silent, don't blame others for not helping.
4. If you share your need, don't presume that others can immediately solve it. You and they may have to work at finding a solution.



COMMUNICATION & ACTIVE LISTENING

5. Recognize the unfairness of blaming others when you have failed to communicate.

6. Recognize that a Franciscan fraternity is not clairvoyant. If you need their help, let them know. It would be a rarity if no help was forthcoming.

7. Don't be ashamed to have needs. It's part of being human.

8. Be responsive when others bring needs to you. If you can't meet them, help the individual get the assistance he/she needs."



VERY OFTEN, THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE AFFECTS THE WAY PEOPLE REACT TO US.

- **Choose your words wisely—try not to use “loaded” words that cause people to react inappropriately.**
 - **Think before you speak.**
- **Be conscious of your tone of voice. The same sentence said two different ways gets a very different reaction!**
- **Be conscious of your body language. The look on our faces or the way we carry ourselves can make us appear compassionate or threatening.**

THE OTHER SIDE OF COMMUNICATION IS LISTENING.

- **Try to develop good listening skills.**
- **Listen without interrupting.**
- **Ask for clarification, if necessary.**
- **Try to keep an open mind to what the person is saying.**
- **Try not to get defensive if someone says something critical.**

Hear them out first!

**TRUE SHARING AND
COMMUNICATION REQUIRES
HUMILITY, PATIENCE AND
UNDERSTANDING OF OUR
BROTHERS AND SISTERS. AS
FRANCISCANS, THOSE ARE THE
QUALITIES WE STRIVE FOR.**

**LET US CONTINUE TO PRACTICE
AND DEVELOP
COMMUNICATION SKILLS BOTH
WITH OUR BROTHERS AND
SISTERS AND WITH GOD.**

