

## Exercise: The Echo and Expand Method

**Objective:** Enhance active listening skills by practicing focused attention, paraphrasing, and thoughtful responses.

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### Instructions

1. **Find a Partner or Join a Group**

This exercise works best with a partner, small group, or even during casual conversations.

2. **Set a Timer**

Allocate 5 minutes per speaker to ensure equal practice.

3. **The Speaker's Role**

- Share a story, idea, or opinion for 1–2 minutes.
- The topic can be light or serious, but it must hold your interest.

4. **The Listener's Role**

- Practice active listening by following these steps:

**a. Maintain Presence:**

- Avoid distractions like your phone or wandering thoughts.
- Use body language—nodding, leaning in, maintaining eye contact.

- **b. Echo Key Points:**

- When the speaker finishes, repeat back their main points in your own words.

- Example:

**Speaker:** *"I had such a rough morning. My car wouldn't start, and I was late for work."*

**Listener:** *"So your car wouldn't start, which made you late for work? That sounds frustrating."*

- **c. Expand Thoughtfully:**

- Add a thoughtful question or insight to encourage deeper discussion.

- Example:

*"What ended up happening at work? Were they understanding?"*

5. **Switch Roles**

Reverse roles and repeat the exercise.

## 6. Reflect on the Experience

After both turns, discuss:

- What felt challenging about staying focused?
  - Did you feel truly heard?
  - How did the paraphrasing and expanding impact the conversation?
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### Advanced Variation

Try this in a group setting where one person speaks, one paraphrases, and another expands. Rotate roles and observe how the dynamic shifts with different listeners.

#### **Goal:**

With consistent practice, you'll strengthen your ability to actively engage, make others feel valued, and foster richer connections.