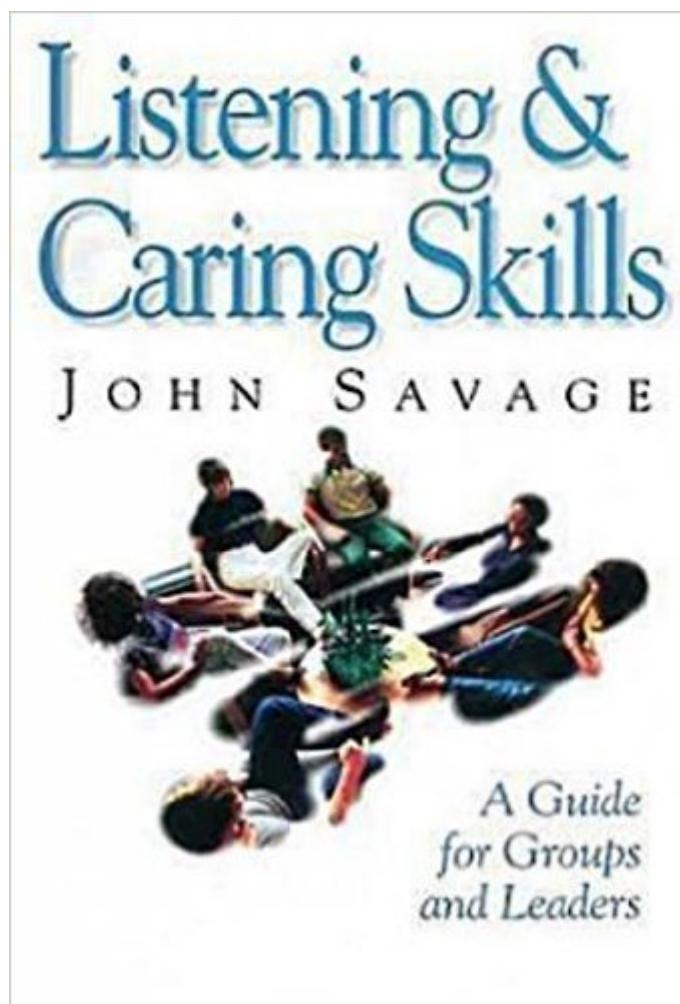


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Listening And Caring Skills In Ministry: A Guide For Groups And Leaders



Synopsis

The secret to leadership and transformation of a group--or of another person--is the quality of the relationship one person has with another. The effective group leader or counselor will be the person who learns how to listen to other people. By studying and employing listening skills, church leaders will engage others more compassionately, allowing them to feel that their needs are being met. These skills can be used with persons who are terminally ill, inactive at church, going through a divorce, in a family with a severely ill person, unemployed, seeking a new church, grieving, traumatized by catastrophe, going through teenage adolescence, in marriage counseling, or leading a ministry team. John Savage offers eleven specific and teachable listening skills for improving relationships among those who do ministry in small-group settings or when offering counsel to others. The skills are taught through oral exercises and unfailingly helpful examples from actual congregational situations. The skills include paraphrasing, productive questions, perception check, expression of feelings and emotions, fogging, negative inquiry, behavior description, and story listening.

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Customer Reviews

I first met John Savage in Sydney Australia when he led a workshop on "Story Listening" It was a brilliant time spent with him. Now fortunately Savage has published an excellent book which is a must for anyone involved in councelling & ministry. What is particulary helpful is the section on "Types of Stories" where the author writes about Reinvestment stories, Rehearsel

stories, Anniversary stories & Transition stories. These are stories told frequently as we listen to others. The book is very practical & clearly set out.

Goes well beyond "active listening" to encouraging and actually hearing the other person's story. Teaches how to set aside one's own agenda and then points out what one can hear when one is truly listening. This book revolutionized the way I listen.

I keep returning to the skills I learned from this book, especially listening for metaphors in stories and dealing with criticism or hostile comments. The advice is applicable to counselors from a wide variety of religious traditions.

I used this book while on Clinical Pastoral Education and serving as a chaplain in a hospital. It was VERY helpful in teaching me skills and techniques for active listening. So often, when having a conversation, my emotions and thoughts tend to guide and influence our talk, but this book helps one to listen not only to the words of the other, but to their feelings, and also to recognize the feelings that are stirring within yourself, to most effectively identify the emotions and needs of the other. I also purchased this for my dad who is a Stephen Minister and he has scoured it over and over finding very helpful advice in his ministry. I highly recommend this book to anyone in counseling or pastoral studies!!!

I was required to read this book as part of a pastoral training program and I'm glad I did. I walked away being able to use some of the skills outlined in the book immediately. Some of the other skills will take more practice but I would highly recommend this book to anyone wishing to communicate better with anyone else from an employer / employee, spouse, volunteers as well as people you may be responsible for counseling or at least, listening to. I will never look at communication the same way again as now, I am listening to the speaker more intently and not just to listen to the 'issue' they wish to discuss. I am listening to the style of their communication and how to bridge the styles if I am naturally another style. Also, it teaches how to use paraphrasing and the most significant aspect I learned directly from this book and had never heard before, was how to teach my critics to help me do better in my weak areas. I will never look at criticism the same way again either; the book teaches how to not only handle it, but respond to it appropriately and actually, diffuse a potential argument. In summary, if you've never learned these skills, pick up this book.

In general, research showed that (besides reading, writing, and speaking) listening is used the most on daily communication. But even though most of us spend the majority of our day listening, it is the communication activity that receives the least instruction in school, seminary, or at university.

Listening not only communicates importance and respect it is also a very important skill for pastoral caregivers. JOHN SAVAGE's book Listening & Caring Skills demonstrates that listening and other caring skills can be learned and they can be perfected. JOHN SAVAGE's book is divided into three main parts: (1) "Basic listening skills for ministry", (2) "Hearing the story", and (3) "Advanced listening skills for ministry". After studying the eleven chapters of the book I come to the result that I benefit mostly from the first two parts of the book. Part three includes issues for future or more advanced learning experiences. Through studying JOHN SAVAGE's book I learned about the gap that might be created in interpersonal communications and how this gap can be closed. I learned the skills of paraphrasing, asking productive questions, and how to make a perception check. In general, I have to be careful not to enter a conversation with preconceived ideas about the other person or his topic of discussion. Once I have a preconceived idea in mind, it's almost impossible to hear what the other person is really saying, because my preconceptions act as a filter, and I might only hear what supports my preconceptions. My developments in these areas are shown in my verbatim, verbatim alternative, and case study. I also became more and more aware of my own feelings and emotions. I understood the nature of emotions and how better to manage them. I benefited a lot from chapter 3 and 7 of the book about behavior descriptions and expression of feelings. I experienced these skills as very helpful in situations of silence. It was a way to express my observations or feelings and to check back if my perceptions correspond with the patient's situation. In most cases it was a way to continue the conversation with the patient - sometimes on a deeper level. As a foreign student (German) the first seven chapters were also very helpful for me because they really offered some concrete instructions how to try the skills (e.g. perception check: stem + feeling word(s) + context + question). Chapter 5 (= fogging) and 6 (= negative inquiry) represented more general communication skills. They were helpful during our group discussions and covenant group. I benefit from chapter 8 (= story listening) and chapter 9 (= story polarization listening) during our story theology seminar and especially while I was reflecting my own case study about a cancer patient with chemotherapy. Finally, I can really recommend JOHN SAVAGE's book Listening & Caring Skills for newcomers in pastoral ministry. You will benefit from this book in every area of pastoral care. It supported me a lot in reaching my learning goals and I am thankful that my CPE supervisor recommended this book to me.

The author's ideas are useful and well-presented--but the Kindle edition has lots of errors, some of which even alter the sense of the sentence. Our technology isn't advanced enough to do the OCR without proofing the output, and a spell checker will not suffice. This is a perfect example of why proofreaders are still needed. Very disappointed, I returned the Kindle edition and will buy a print copy for my library.

The book itself is amazing for the knowledge it imparts. Savage teaches skills in a very easy to understand way. This is required reading for a graduate class I am enrolled in. This being said, the Kindle edition is FULL of errors. The letter I is replaced with the number 1 in multiple cases. Simple words such as "feeling" are missing letters. I highly recommend the book, but stay away from the Kindle Edition.

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