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LISTENING TIPS FOR ANTI-RACISM ALLIES

The most important factor in creating a good experience of listening is taking a moment to center yourself and decide that you WANT to empathetically listen. You can practice doing small listening preparation sessions when getting ready to listen to other people you have disagreements with that are not about race (e.g. family members, friends, neighbors, etc.).

Preparing to Listen: Some Useful Steps in Self-Management and Talking to Yourself

Get centered by taking some deep breaths	Remind yourself that you can listen empathetically, and imagine yourself doing it
Think back to a time when you very much wanted to be listened to	Conceive of the person as a vulnerable person, maybe even a child, who wants to be understood
Tell yourself that listening empathetically to another's viewpoint does not mean you are agreeing with it	Remind yourself that the listening process you are about to do is part of a long-term effort to improve conditions you care about

Some Steps That You Think May Help As You Prepare to Listen to a Racism Skeptic

1.

2.

Strategies to Help You Stay in Listening Mode Once the Conversation Has Started

1.

2.

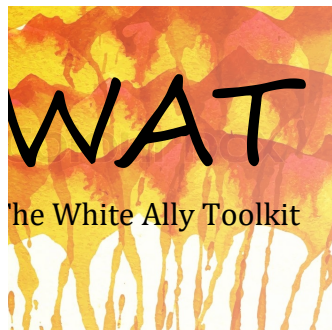
Reconnecting With Your Values

IF YOU VALUE...	ASK YOURSELF...
Empathy	Is there a positive intent in the person that I can connect to?
Curiosity	Is there a perspective within the person's point of view that I need to understand more?
Patience	How can I extend to the skeptic the same willingness to stay engaged that I want?

Mind-Body Tactics

Some allies have found that some physical actions, perhaps combined with particular thoughts, can be helpful in keeping them in a listening stance. Some possibilities that have emerged:

Biting your lip	Taking deeper breaths
Imagining there is a drop of super-glue on your lips so they stay together and out of the "I'm about to say something" position	Looking directly in their eyes and mentally sending them support
Shifting your position to one that is more relaxed	Touching your tongue to the roof of your mouth



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Attention-Based Tactics

A key dimension of listening is being aware of what we are listening for. This is particularly relevant to encounters between people with different points of view. In these cases, anti-racism allies are often listening for things that we disagree with or worse, sentiments that we think are reflections of white supremacy.

The following are some common examples of what anti-racist allies are commonly listening for when talking to skeptics. When you have an extra moment, put a check mark next to the 2-3 things you are most commonly listening for when talking to a racism skeptic. Feel free to add other ideas if they are relevant to your listening pattern.

Common Ideas That Anti-Racist Allies Are Listening for When Talking to Racism Skeptics	This is often what I am listening for (place check mark)
Evidence of beliefs about POC inferiority	
Beliefs that reflect unacknowledged white privilege	
Inaccurate understandings of how racism works	
Deficits in empathy or compassion for people of color	
Ignorance of key facts in American or world history	
Conservative political ideology	
Evidence that the skeptic is more racist than they think of themselves as being	

Alternative Things to Listen For

- Experiences that are similar to ones you have had
- Things you can agree with
- Underlying needs embedded within what the person is saying
- Potential openings for future conversation
- _____
- _____

Which of the techniques for helping you stay in listening mode seem like they might be the most helpful to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.