# **Topic: The Science of Active Listening**

### **Definition of Skill**

**Active Listening** is the external action of empathy. It requires the listener to fully concentrate, understand, respond, and then remember what is being said. It is distinct from simply "hearing," which is a passive physical process.

### **Core Content**

**Moving from Feeling to Action** While empathy is often described as a "vicarious feeling" (internal), active listening is how you demonstrate that feeling to the outside world. In a job interview or team setting, it is the primary way you show respect and intelligence.

**The Four Levels of Listening** Most communication failures happen because we are listening at the wrong level.

1. **Ignoring:** Not listening at all.
2. **Pretending:** Nodding and saying "uh-huh," but your mind is elsewhere.
3. **Selective Listening:** Hearing only what fits your own agenda or confirming what you already believe.
4. **Empathetic (Active) Listening:** Listening with the intent to understand the other person's frame of reference, not just their words.

**The Professional Edge** Empathetic listeners are rare. When you listen to a client or boss at Level 4, you catch details that others miss. You understand the *intent* behind the instruction, which makes you a more efficient and trusted employee.