Active Listening and Giving Feedback

1. Divide into pairs and designate one person A and the other B.

2. The pair will select a statement from the following exercise that they are willing to discuss where their positions are at opposite ends of the continuum.

3. A will spend between 2-4 minutes expressing his/her view on the topic.

4. After A is through, B will take 2-4 minutes paraphrasing A’s statement, stating in his/her own words what A’s remarks meant to him/her. There is to be no discussion of the statements. A simply makes the statement; B paraphrases it back. Some general rules for paraphrasing response are:
   a. Restate the other person’s expressed feelings and ideas in your own words; don’t mimic or parrot the exact words of the other person.
   b. Preface reflected remarks with “You feel…,” “You think…,” “It seems to you that…,” “It sometimes appears to you that…,” and so on.
   c. In paraphrasing another person’s statements, avoid any indication of approval or disapproval. Refrain from blaming, interpreting, giving advice, or persuading.

5. A and B should reverse roles and repeat steps 3 and 4.

6. Do not take notes when it is your turn to listen. Try to capture your partner’s main ideas by depending on your listening skills.

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Reflection Time

Jot down answers to the following questions to use later:

a. How did it feel to make a statement and have your partner paraphrase it?

b. How did it feel to paraphrase a statement made by your partner?

Adapted from 2011 Workshop on Facilitative Skills for Collaborative Leaders by Donna R. Ching at Kapiolani Community College

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