5. Seek First to Understand Then to Be Being Understood

I listen to other people’s ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.

1) Practice reflective listening. Say something to your kids and then have them repeat back what you said. Do this until you feel like everyone in the family listens without thinking of a response simultaneously.

2) Conflict Resolution: The next time there is a problem within the family have the involved parties sit down and listen to the other person’s point of view. They have to be able to restate the other person’s feelings before they can state theirs or respond to what was said. (“So what I heard you say was…”)

3) Take family time to learn about other cultures.

4) Make a family talking stick and take turns listening

Talking Stick:

Only one personal holds the Talking Stick. It is that person’s turn to talk. Everyone listens. When they are done, they pass the talking stick to the next person. It is now that person’s turn to talk. Everyone listens.

A Talking stick can be made out of anything. Design and make one as a family.

You can teach listening skills to your children by modeling effective listening. With an older child, you can talk to him or her about an issue you always argue about and say, “Help me understand your point of view.” Then really listen without interruptions. When your child is finished, repeat in your own words what you heard until he or she acknowledges feeling understood. Then it’s your turn to speak and your child’s turn to listen.