



adverse advisers

There are many ways to listen and communicate poorly. The following examples illustrate several of the most ineffective listening styles in response to a friend who says “Gee, I feel terrible. My dog was killed by a car last week, and the whole family is depressed.”



the bumper sticker guru

spreads clichés and proverbs. “Losing a pet is difficult, but remember, life is like grass and fades quickly. Give thanks in all circumstances, and don’t be anxious about anything.”



the drill sergeant gives orders, directions, and commands. Thinks he/she can run your life better than you can. “You’ll feel better if you go to the dog pound right now and get another dog. Quit thinking about the past and focus on the future! Snap to it!”



the boxer loves labels and uses all the current jargon to box people in. If they can put you and your feelings in a box everything will be OK. “You’re simply a victim of the grief process. It’s perfectly normal to have grief, even over a dog. There are five stages of grief, so accept them.”



the prophet seems to know your future and loves to predict it for you. “This is just the beginning of your pain. Just think how you’re going to feel when it’s one of your kids that gets hurt. The world is getting worse and worse all the time...”



the historian loves to hear your problems and switch the conversation to similar stories about themselves. “I lost a dog once. Broke my heart. Never got over it either. Speaking of accidents, did you hear about my near miss?”



the FBI detective

cares about just the facts, and bores in with a barrage of questions. “When did it happen? How did you first find out about it? Who was driving the car? Did they have insurance? Was he speeding?”



dr. deodorant

can’t stand unpleasantness in any form. Covers discomfort with sweet smelling words. “Oh, you’re such a wonderful parent to give your children a pet. You are a very sensitive person and feel so deeply, and you’re so humble to share your feelings this way.”



the accuser looks at your problem and says that it is YOUR fault, then adds judgment to keep you depressed. “You should have been more careful with what you let your dog do. It is not very smart to let a little dog run around on the streets. You did the wrong thing, and look what happened!”



the chicken soup therapist

(a first cousin to Dr. Deodorant) tries to make your problems disappear with kindly actions rather than words. “There, there. A cup of soup will make it all better. Why don’t I have the kids over for a big party? I’ll fix ice cream and cake for dessert, and we can watch a dog movie on Netflix!”