

# switched on

## SORTING OUT THE SMALL THINGS



control of your body – if your body is slouched, chances are your attention span will relax too. “Be genuine with all this – others can tell when you’re just making the right moves but not really taking in what they’re saying,” says Gill.

### INTENSE INTERACTION

It’s important to know it’s absolutely OK to ask questions to ensure you understand the meaning behind what the other person’s saying. “Asking questions at the appropriate moment shows you are interested in their point of view,” says Gill.

However, knowing when to stay silent is just as important as seeking clarification. You don’t always have to say something in response to everything your friend brings up. “Allow the other person to pause and think without interrupting them,” says Gill.

### ALL ABOUT AMBIENCE

A perfect D & M needs the perfect setting. Gill suggests losing the noise. “If it’s hard to hear, move to a quieter location. And remember to turn down distractions, like the TV or music,” she advises.

### A shoulder to cry on

What do you do when you know someone needs to talk, but they’re bottling all their feelings up instead? Gill has this advice:

- » Be someone they can trust.
- » Respect that they’re in a difficult place emotionally, and that it may be hard to open up.
- » Listen to them without being judgemental.
- » Give them your full attention – listen without interrupting.
- » Be patient and gentle.
- » Suggest that they speak to a trusted adult if you think they might need more support than what you can offer.

### What not to say

Unless you want to sound like you’re trivialising her problems, steer clear of these:

- » “Don’t let that get to you.”
- » “Why are you being such a drama queen?”
- » “I know exactly how you feel.” **GF**

Are you finding it hard to be “all ears”? We’ve got the perfect solution.

**Y**ou may not want to hear this, but there’s no way to get through life without listening. Heck – if you didn’t listen, you wouldn’t notice your hairdresser confirming, “So blue foils and a mullet cut?”. What better reason to train your ears to do what they’re meant to do?

We spoke to life coach Gill Skeer (creativecoach.co) to get tips on how to be a better listener. You’ve already made it through one paragraph, so we know you can focus...

### MIND OVER DISTRACTION

It’s so easy to let your mind wander about all the things you should be doing while your friend is confiding in you, but it’s so much more important to be there for them to bounce ideas off. Gill says, “In that moment, make the other person your priority. Give them your full

attention and engage all your senses to maintain your focus”.

It’s also a good idea to get rid of any physical distractions, such as your phone. Just pop it on silent in your bag while your friend’s talking so she knows she’s really got your full attention. When you know your bestie needs your most awesome advice, it’s easy to worry about what to say next. Don’t. If you’re really listening, that will come naturally and will be so much more sincere than a general thought you just built up in your mind.

### ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER...

When truly listening to someone, actions are very important. Uncross your arms, keep your eyes on the speaker, face them, and keep

**Be  
genuine  
with  
your  
actions.**