

## **Thomas Gordon's Twelve Roadblocks to Listening**

The first 5 categories can take away the client's autonomy:

**1. Ordering, directing or commanding:**

*"Stop complaining and do something about it!"*

*"You HAVE to do this. It was ordered by the court!"*

**2. Warning or threatening:**

*"You'd better get your act together if you're gonna make it on probation"*

*"Another hot UA and you're going back to jail!"*

**3. Moralizing, preaching, giving "shoulds" and "oughts".**

*"You should learn how to plan ahead"*

*"I can't believe you think that's okay!"*

**4. Advising, offering solutions or suggestions.**

*"It's pretty clear that you need to..."*

*"What I would do it..."*

**5. Teaching, lecturing, giving logical arguments.**

*"You'd better remember, you only have 2 weeks to get that community service done."*

*"You are not going to stay sober without going to AA!"*

The next responses point out inadequacies and faults:

**6. Judging, criticizing, directing, blaming.**

*"You're in still in bed at 11:00 in the morning!???"*

*"You just can't keep a job." "You're wrong."*

**7. Name calling, stereotyping, labeling.**

*"That's typical for addicts."*

*"Why don't you act your age!"*

**8. Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing.**

*"You are avoiding this!" "It's not about being a felon, it's because you're not responsible" "Do you know what your real problem is...?"*

These messages try to make the person feel better or deny there's a problem:

**9. Praising, agreeing, giving positive evaluations.**

*"That's exactly what I would do!"*  
*"You're a good guy."*

**10. Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling.**

*"You'll figure this out – no problem!" "Don't worry.  
Things are gonna turn out just fine"*

This response tries to solve the problem for the person.

**11. Questioning, interrogating, cross-examining.**

*"Why are you gonna do it that way?" "Do you  
still hang out with the same people?"*

This response tends to divert the person or avoid the subject all together.

**12. Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, changing the subject.**

*"Seems like you got up on the wrong side of the bed today."  
"I see the Vikings won last night. Are you a fan?"*

***A Closer Look at # 4: "Giving Advice"***

**Advising, offering solutions and suggestions.**

*"What I would do is..."*  
*"Why don't you ..."*  
*"Have you tried..."*

**What makes *giving advice* a roadblock?**

**Under what circumstance is it okay to give advice when using MI?**

*In which stage(s) of change would you give advice with permission?*