



## 1. Leave English Behind

Try to communicate ONLY in your language.

**Basic questions:** Early on, the apprentice should learn how to ask questions in the languages, such as:

How do you say \_\_\_\_\_? What is this? What is that?

What am I doing? What are you doing? What shall I do now?

**Reminding each other:** in the beginning, it will be hard to stop using English, but keep reminding each other. Some useful phrases you should learn:

Now say that in our language. Please speak to me in our language. Tell me a story.

Tell me what's in this picture.

## 2. Make Yourself Understood with Nonverbal Communication

Instead of switching to English, use actions, gestures, and facial expressions to act out what you are trying to say. Use pictures, books and magazines as well as objects around you to help convey your meaning, and to talk together about what you see.

**Some ideas:** Watch TV with the sound turned off, and talk in your language about what is going on. Use a photo album or a children's story book to tell a story in your language.

## 3. Teach in Full Sentences

An apprentice needs to hear a word many different times in many different situations to be able to understand and remember it.

**Example:** when teaching the word for "door", instead of just pointing at the door and saying the word, you can say things like:

This is a door. Where is the door?

Now I am going to open the door. I'm knocking on the door.

Go out the door. Close the door.

etc.

## 4. Aim for Real Communication in Your Language

Try to do everything in your language. Don't think of your language as something you do only during lessons, but as the everyday-language of your community.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Leanne Hinton. 2002. *How to Keep Your Language Alive*. Berkeley: Heyday Books. Refer to Chapter 2, pages 7-19.

## **5. Language is Also Culture**

Your language is not just a translation of English. There may be important culture-specific points to keep in mind when you say certain things. For example, we talked about the apprentice learning to ask questions, but it may be impolite to ask certain questions in your language. Or, certain stories may be restricted to a certain time of year. The apprentice needs to learn these things too.

## **6. Focus on Listening and Speaking**

Some apprentices are eager to learn to write and learn about the grammar of their language, and this can be helpful, but in order to become a fluent speaker of your language, your MAIN FOCUS NEEDS TO BE ON LISTENING AND SPEAKING. We can't stress this enough!

## **7. Learn and Teach the Language Through Activities**

Live your daily life together. Don't think of this time together as outside of your normal patterns of living. For example, do you have to cook supper? Do it, and talk about what you're doing in your language. There are many more good ideas on pages 16-17 of the book.

## **8. Use Audiotaping and Videotaping**

This is useful to help the apprentice practice, and it creates a record for the master's family as well.

## **9. Be an Active Learner**

The master is the language expert, but s/he does not always have to take charge of deciding what, how, and when to teach. The apprentice should feel free to help guide his/her learning experience as much as possible.

## **10. Be Sensitive to Each Other's Needs; Be Patient and Proud of Each Other and Yourselves**

"If you start to get discouraged, always remember that you are doing the best you can, and you deserve to be proud. You are making a heroic commitment to a wonderful cause by working together to bring your language back out into the air where it belongs." (Hinton 2002:19)