



The Power of Listening

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What is Listening?

- listening (ILA, 1996): the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages; to hear something with thoughtful attention
- Effective communication is 2-way
 - depends on speaking and listening

Listening vs. Hearing

- Hearing- physical process; natural; passive
- Listening- physical & mental process; active; learned process; a skill
- Listening is hard!



You must choose to participate in the process of listening.



Fast Facts



- We listen at 125-250 wpm, think at 1000-3000 wpm
- 75% of the time we are distracted, preoccupied or forgetful
- 20% of the time, we remember what we hear
- More than 35% of businesses think listening is a top skill for success
- Less than 2% of people have had formal education with listening

Percentage of Communication

<u>Mode of Communication</u>	<u>Formal Years of Training</u>	<u>Percentage of Time Used</u>
Writing	12 years	9%
Reading	6-8 years	16 %
Speaking	1-2 years	30%
Listening	0-few hours	45%

Why Be A Good Listener?

Needs of the Customer...

- To be **recognized and remembered**
- To feel **valued**
- To feel **appreciated**
- To feel **respected**
- To feel **understood**
- To feel **comfortable** about a want or need

Listening is the most powerful form of acknowledgment

...a way of saying, "You are important."

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Listening builds stronger relationships

...creates a desire to cooperate among people because they feel accepted and acknowledged.

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Listening promotes being heard

..."Seek first to understand, then be understood."
- Stephen Covey

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Listening creates acceptance and openness

...conveys the message that "I am not judging you."

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Listening leads to learning

...openness encourages personal growth and learning

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Listening reduces stress and tension

...minimizes confusion and misunderstanding, eliminating related stress and tension

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Listening is CRITICAL in conflict resolution

...much conflict comes from the need to be heard. Successful resolution depends on being a non-anxious presence.

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Barriers to Listening



- Equate With Hearing
- Uninteresting Topics
- Speaker's Delivery
- External Distractions
- Mentally Preparing Response
- Listening for Facts
- Personal Concerns
- Personal Bias
- Language/Culture Differences
- Faking Attention



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Bad Listening Habits

- Criticizing the subject or the speaker
- Getting over-stimulated
- Listening only for facts
- Not taking notes OR outlining everything
- Tolerating or creating distraction
- Letting emotional words block message
- Wasting time difference between speed of speech and speed of thought

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When Are You Listening?

- Non-Verbal Encouragers
- Verbal Encouragers

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Active Listening

- ... Allows you to make sure you hear the words and understand the meaning behind the words
- Goal: go beyond listening to understanding

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Active Listening Requires...

- Definite Intent to Listen
- Focus on the Speaker
- Verbal and Non-Verbal Encouragers
- Feedback Loop to Insure Accuracy

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Active Listening (4 Steps)

1. Listen
2. Question
3. Reflect-Paraphrase
4. Agree



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Step 1: Listen

- To Feelings As Well As Words
 - Words – Emotions -- Implications
- Focus on Speaker
 - Don't plan, speak, or get distracted
- What Is Speaker Talking About?
 - Topic? Speaker? Listener? Others?
- Look At Speaker
- Use Verbal & Non-Verbal Encouragers

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Step 2: Question

- 3 Purposes
 - Demonstrates you are listening
 - Gather information
 - Clarification
- Open-ended
 - Tell me more?
 - How did you feel?
 - Then what happened?

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Step 3: Reflect-Paraphrase

- Reflect What Is Said (In your words)
- Reflect Feelings
- Reframe
 - Capture the essence of the communication
 - Remove negative framing
 - Move toward problem solving

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Step 4: Agree

- Get Speaker's Consent to Your Reframing
- Speaker Has Been Heard and Knows It!
- Solution Is Near!

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Activity

- **Speaker** – talk for 2 min.
- **Listener** – listen using the skills we've discussed
- **Observer** – observe the application of the skills and take notes



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