

LISTENING

Reasons Why We Are Poor Listeners

Communications experts suggest that 90% of communication is non-verbal; about 55% is through obvious body language and 35% is based upon how you say it.

- Our predominant thoughts focus on ourselves.
 - We see ourselves as the most important element of our lives.
 - Our agendas take precedence over theirs.
- Our minds wander.
 - We normally speak at 130 words per minute.
 - We listen and understand at up to 400 words per minute.
 - We can think at up to 1,000 words per minute.
 - Mental drift is too easy.
- We cannot wait to reply.
 - Our unbridled enthusiasm to reply sabotages the communication model.
 - We listen with the sole intent to reply.
- We interrupt – a lot.
 - Everyone has an opinion and loves to get his two cents worth in, even if we are not asked.

Signs on How to Recognize a Good Listener

- You can feel that the listener is fully present and in the moment with you.
- The listener will keep eye contact with you.
- The listener will nod, smile and give you auditory feedback.
- The listener will encourage you to continue talking.
- The listener will parrot back what you are saying when appropriate.
- The listener will only finish your sentence when appropriate.
- The listener goes by the 80% listening and 20% talking rule.
- The listener will keep the conversation focused on your topics of discussion.
- The listener knows how to empathize with you.
- The listener will ask you thoughtful and open-ended questions about what you are talking about.

Keys to Listening

Which will win you friends, improve your marriage, boost your profits and make people want to follow you anywhere.

- Listening is not a passive activity.
- Listen for unspoken fears, concern, moods, and aspirations.
- Good listening requires great wisdom.
- Listen to others with respect and validation.
- Listen without thinking about how you're going to respond.
- Listen for tell-tale signs of impending trouble.
- Listen with optimism and positive human regard.

How to be a Good Listener

- Eyes are watching
- Ears are listening
- Lips are closed
- Hands are still
- Feet are quiet
- *Ask them how they're doing.* Don't wait for them to come up and tell you what's going on.
- Ask open-ended questions. For example, "How's it going?" is better than, "things are good, right?"
- Ask a few times. Ask follow-up questions. That conveys you really want to hear their experience and they are much more likely to tell you what's really going on.
- When you get the info, find how they feel before providing a solution. Instead of, "OK, try this solution", say, "That must be frustrating" or "I'd be overwhelmed myself" or "That would bug me too." You have just entered a place inside their head or heart where few people go.
- Don't worry that listening means agreement. Many people hesitate in listening because they are concerned the person will think, "Great, you agree with me." If that is true, you need to deal with that person's attitude of entitlement. But most of the time, people don't assume that.
- Don't give advice until they ask you for it. My experience is that, over half the time, if you listen well and support, people are smart enough to solve their own challenges, and your "being there" was all they needed.

Listen Written by someone who desires to be heard:

When I ask you to listen to me and you start-giving advice, you have not done what I ask. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I should not feel that way, you have trapped my feelings. When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange, as that may seem. Listen. All I ask is that you listen. Not talk or do . . . just listen and hear me. I can do for myself. I am not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless. When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness. But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling and when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Irrational feelings make sense when we understand them. Perhaps that is why prayer works sometimes for some people, because God listens well. So please listen and just hear me. And if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn and I'll listen to you. Remember, the Holy Spirit is working inside of me while I share. He will help me process my feelings, thoughts, ideas, concerns, lies, fears and invitations. Your gift to me is making space so I can hear Him.