

Why Listening Should Matter to You

"We have two ears and one tongue so we can listen more and speak less." - Diogenes, a Greek philosopher, 323 BC

Listening takes a big chunk of your time.

People spend more time listening than in any other type of communication. Poor listening is the greatest cause of arguments, misunderstandings and hurt feelings in your family and school. It will hold you back in your job and your relationships.

Rules for good listening aren't hard to follow.

Being a good listener rewards you by helping you form relationships and succeed in your job. Simple rules can help you learn to listen. Here are ones that work:



Just do it! You have to be willing to listen, and a lot of people don't try hard enough.

Stop talking. You can't listen if you're caught up in what you want to say next.

Face the speaker. Nothing works better for listening than looking eye-to-eye at the person talking.

Pay attention to what isn't said. A large part of listening is watching the speaker's facial expressions and body language. You can learn a lot by what you see.

Don't jump to conclusions. Pay attention to what is said and keep an open mind about what you hear.

Stop zoning out. You may want to think about what is ahead for your day, but that's the way you miss out on important information.

Keep control of your emotions. If you get worked up about something that's being said, none of the other rules matter. You will have lost your ability to listen.

Put your phone away. That's a no-brainer, but watch how many people look down at messages or thumb away on a text while seemingly trying to listen.

Keep your "My story is worse than yours" tale to yourself. You'll have your opportunity to talk another time.

Action: Liam and Nora walk out of their work space together and Liam asks, "Do you have a minute to listen to what happened with my boss today?" Nora says, "Sure," as she pulls her phone out of her pocket and starts thumbing. As Liam describes his troubles, Nora hears a ding, looks at her screen and laughs, "You won't believe what Shannon said." When Liam doesn't respond, she looks at him and asks, "What's wrong?" He shakes his head and walks away. What advice would you give Nora to improve her communications?

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Note to instructors: Listening is one of the most under-rated skills among workers, yet strong listening skills carry great weight on the job. One of your challenges is to convince students of the importance of listening to their future job success. *Job Ready Career Skills* lessons listed below will help your students become better listeners.

Job Ready Career Skills Listening Lessons

Reasons for Listening
Benefits of Listening
Barriers to Listening
Listening Strategies
Ways We Filter What We Hear

Developing a Listening Attitude
Show You Are Listening
Asking Questions
Obtaining Feedback
Getting Others to Listen

