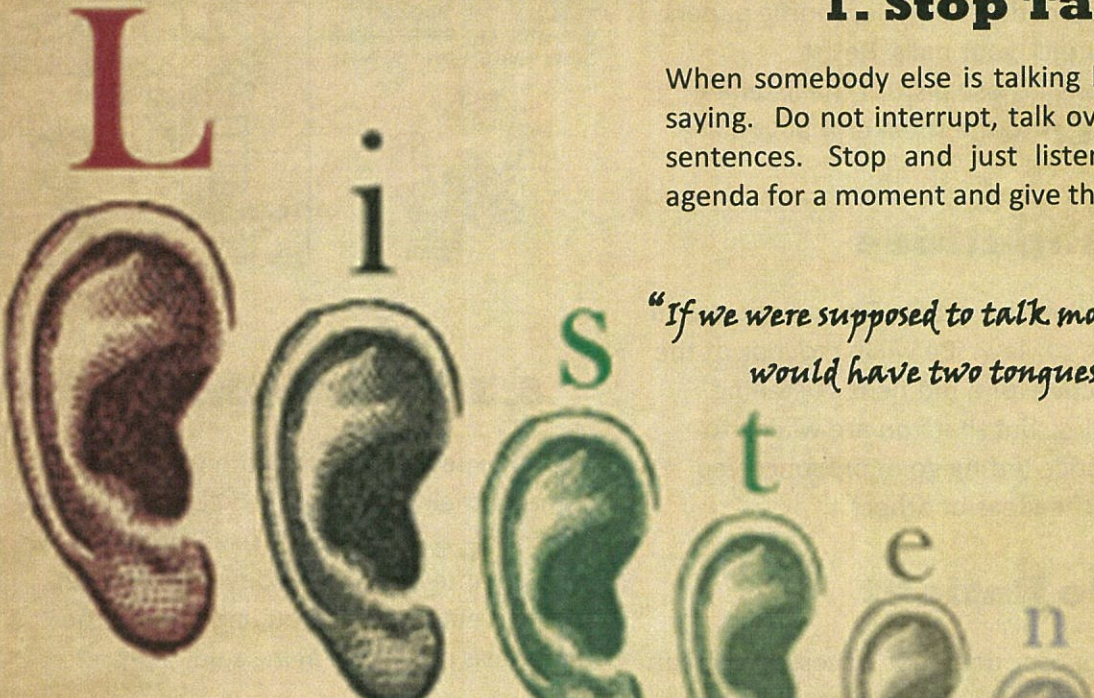


1. Stop Talking

When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying. Do not interrupt, talk over them, or finish their sentences. Stop and just listen. Dare to drop your agenda for a moment and give them your full attention.

"If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear."

- Mark Twain



"Dialogue's roots tell us that dialogue is about the "flow of meaning": dia means through and logos is "word" or "meaning." Dialogue is meaning moving through oneself, or through a group of people, enlivening and changing them. This points to a core requirement for dialogue – the shift from an extractive to contributive mindset. Most people try to take some value from a conversation. Instead, we need to think about how what we add could be a gift to the people involved. Creativity requires an orientation in giving, not taking."

- William Isaacs

PRINCIPLES OF LISTENING

2. Get into Listening Mode

Still the voices within and focus on the speaker – put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time is my dentist appointment, etc. – but by staying in the present moment and concentrating on the message, the quality of your experience and the overall group dynamic is increased.

3. Support the Speaker

Help the person talking to feel free to speak. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but avoid staring – show that you are listening and that you are willing to understand.



4. Resist Getting Distracted

Focus on what is being said: don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, or pick your nails. Resist unnecessary interruptions. These disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

5. Empathize

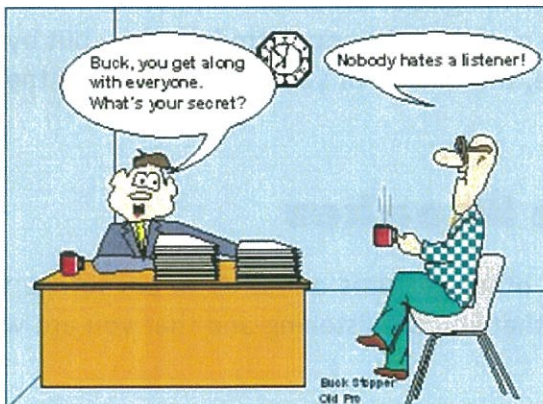
Listen as an ally in a cooperative mode. Try to understand the other person's point of view. Be willing to look at the issue from their perspective for a moment. Listening does not mean consenting, but that you are willing to hear someone out. Practice letting go of preconceived ideas. Remain open to the ideas of others.

6. Be Patient

A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished. Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time. Sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Don't interrupt or finish a sentence for someone if it can be avoided.

7. Suspend Judgment

Don't let a person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what they are really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking: some people are more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents, and others make excessive arm movements. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.



THE MORE SENTENCES YOU COMPLETE, THE HIGHER YOUR SCORE! THE IDEA IS TO BLOCK THE OTHER GUY'S THOUGHTS AND EXPRESS YOUR OWN! THAT'S HOW YOU WIN!



8. Listen to the Tone

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive, but everybody uses pitch, tone and volume of voice in conversation – let these elements help you understand the emphasis of what is being said.

9. Listen for Ideas

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions and focus, this becomes easier.

10. Listen with Your Eyes

We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes so watch carefully to pick up additional information transmitted via non-verbal communication, but avoid jumping to conclusions. Make it a habit to seek clarification to ensure that your understanding is correct.

Restating, and/or asking follow-up questions, is a powerful way to demonstrate your active listening ability.