

LISTENING TO OTHERS

1. STOP TALKING -- you can't listen while you are talking.
2. EMPATHIZE WITH OTHER PERSON -- try to put yourself in her place so that you can see what she is trying to get at.
3. ASK QUESTIONS -- when you don't understand, when you need further clarification, when you want him to like you, when you want to show that you are listening. But don't ask questions that will embarrass him or show him up.
4. DON'T GIVE UP TOO SOON -- don't interrupt other person; give her time to say what she has to say.
5. CONCENTRATE ON WHAT HE IS SAYING -- actively focus your attention on his words, his ideas, and his feelings related to the subject.
6. LOOK AT THE OTHER PERSON -- his face, his mouth, his eyes, his hands, will all help him to communicate with you. They help you concentrate, too. Make him feel that you are listening.
7. SMILE AND GRUNT APPROPRIATELY -- but don't overdo it.
8. LEAVE YOUR EMOTIONS BEHIND (if you can) -- try to push your worries, your fears, your problems, outside the meeting room. They may prevent you from listening well.
9. CONTROL YOUR ANGER -- try not to get angry at what she is saying; your anger may prevent you from understanding her words or meaning.
10. GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS -- put down any papers, pencils, etc., you have in your hands; they may distract your attention.
11. GET THE MAIN POINTS -- concentrate on the main ideas and not the illustrative material; examples, stories, statistics, etc., are important, but are usually not the main points. Examine them only to see if they prove, support, define the main ideas.

12. **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION** -- only part of the responsibility rests with the speaker; you, as the listener, have an important part. Try to understand and, if you don't, ask for clarification.
13. **REACT TO IDEAS, NOT TO PERSON** -- don't let your reactions to the person influence your interpretation of what she says. Her ideas may be good even if you don't like her as a person or the way she looks.
14. **DON'T ARGUE MENTALLY** -- when you are trying to understand the other person, it is a handicap to argue with him mentally as he is speaking. This sets up a barrier between you and the speaker.
15. **USE THE DIFFERENCE IN RATE** -- you can listen faster than she can talk, so use this rate difference to your advantage by trying to stay on the right track, anticipate what she is going to say, think back over what she has said, evaluate her development, etc. Rate difference: speech rate is about 100 to 150 words per minute; thinking, 250 to 500.
16. **LISTEN FOR WHAT IS NOT SAID** -- sometimes you can learn just as much by determining what the other person leaves out or avoids in his talking as you can by listening to what he says. Remember the projection tests.
17. **LISTEN TO HOW SOMETHING IS SAID** -- we frequently concentrate so hard on what is said that we miss the importance of the emotional reactions and attitudes related to what is said. A person's attitudes and emotional reactions may be more important than what she says in so many words.
18. **DON'T ANTAGONIZE SPEAKER** -- you may cause the other person to conceal his ideas, emotions, and attitudes by antagonizing him in any of a number of way: arguing, criticizing, taking notes, not taking notes, asking questions, not asking questions, etc. Try to judge and be aware of the effect you are having on the other person. Adapt to him.
19. **LISTEN FOR HIS PERSONALITY** -- one of the best ways of finding out information about a person is to listen to her talk; as she talks, you can begin to find out what she likes and dislikes, what her motivations are, what her value system is, what she thinks about everything and anything, what makes her tick.

20. AVOID JUMPING TO ASSUMPTIONS -- they can get you into trouble trying to understand other persons. Don't assume that he uses words in the same way you do; that he didn't say what he meant, but you understand what he meant; that he is avoiding looking at you in the eye because he is telling a lie; that he is trying to embarrass you by looking you in the eye; that he is distorting the truth because what he says doesn't agree with what you think; that he is lying because he has interpreted the facts differently from you; that he is unethical because he is trying to win you over to his point of view; that he is angry because he is enthusiastic in presenting his view. Assumptions like these may turn out to be true, but more often they just get in the road of your understanding and reaching agreement or compromise.

21. AVOID CLASSIFYING THE SPEAKER -- it has some value, but beware! Too frequently we classify a person as one type of person and we try to fit everything she says into what makes sense coming from that type of person. She is a Republican. Therefore, our perceptions of what she says or means are all shaded by whether we like or dislike Republicans. At times it helps us to understand people to know their politics, their religious beliefs, their jobs, etc., but people have the trait of being unpredictable and not fitting into their classifications.

22. AVOID HASTY JUDGEMENT -- wait until all the facts are in before making any judgments.

23. RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN PREJUDICE -- try to be aware of your own feeling toward the speaker, the subject, the occasion, etc., and allow for these pre-judgments.

24. IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF REASONING -- frequently it is difficult to sort out good and faulty reasoning when you are listening. Nevertheless, it is so important a job that a listener should bend every effort to learn to spot faulty reasoning when he hears it.

25. EVALUATE FACTS AND EVIDENCE -- as you listen, try to identify not only the significance of the facts and evidence, but also their relatedness to the argument.

NOTE: This material was discovered in a stack of hand written papers with reference to a Dr. Conrad Rosz, Assistant Professor, Communications Skills, Michigan State University, no date. It's old but is still great!