

PRINCIPLES OF LISTENING

10 Principles of effective listening are

1. Stop talking (Don't talk, Listen) :

when somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, we should not interrupt, talk over them, or finish sentences for them. When the other person has finished talking then we may need to clarify to ensure that we have received their message accurately

2. Prepare yourself to listen (Relax) :

We must focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts –such as lunch, catch the train, going to rain etc. we should try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the message that are being communicated.

3. Put the speaker at ease (Help the speaker to feel free to speak) :

We should remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact, to show that we are listening and understanding what is being said.

4. Remove distractions (Focus on what is being said) :

We shouldn't doodle , shuffle papers, look out of the window, pick our fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that we are bored or distracted. .

5. Empathise (Try to understand the other persons point of view):

We should look at the issues from their perspective. We should not think about pre conceived ideas. By having open mind we can fully empathise with the speaker. If the speaker says something that we disagree with then we should wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.

6. Be patient (A pause , even a long pause does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished):

We should be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes to formulate what to say and how to say it. We should never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.

7. Avoid personal prejudice (try to be impartial):

We can't become irritated and can't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract us from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking , some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking, others like to sit still. We should focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

8. Listen to the tone (Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying):

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive, everybody will use pitch, tone volume of voice in certain situations, these will help us to understand and emphasis of what is being said.

9. Listen for ideas not just words (you need to get the whole picture , not the isolated bits and pieces):

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is availability 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. Wait and watch for non verbal communication(gestures , facial expressions, eye movements can all be important):

We are not habituated to listen with our ears only but also with our eyes. Means we watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non verbal communication.