

Listening Effectively



Listening effectively is the key to good communication. You will be a successful listener if you hear what other person is trying to say and when the speaker feels they have been heard. Listening also involves paying attention to body language, feelings and words. Being an effective listener will help improve both your performance at work, as well as your relationships.

So how do I work on being a more effective listener?

- Be aware of when you start thinking of how you are going to respond. Once this reaction has kicked in you may have put in barriers to effective listening and you are no longer communicating well.
- Try to pay more attention to non-verbal communication than actual words. Take note of body language, tone of voice, facial expressions and feelings behind words.
- After listening to someone, try paraphrasing to clarify your understanding
- Be sympathetic to the speaker if there are underlying feelings.
- Ask more open-ended questions.
- Work on your own non-verbal listening responses. For example, try looking at the other person while you are talking and listening, making strong eye contact. Acknowledge the speaker with nods and avoid doing busy work or trying to watch or listen to something else at the same time.

Good listening skills once mastered really help. When someone feels that they have been listened to then they tend to listen themselves with more care and make clear exactly what they are thinking and feeling.