



Listening to Learn Takeaway Message

Listening implies more than just hearing words that have been spoken. Listening is the conscious effort on the part of the listener to understand a message that another is trying to convey.

Listening is Important for Effective leadership

- We form connections with other people by listening. Sharing ideas leads to familiarity and builds trust, understanding, and awareness. These, in turn, form the building blocks of friendship and teamwork.
- Listening is a powerful tool when used with young people. Most youth spend the majority of their lives listening to parents, teachers, coaches, etc. and find it unusual for an adult to be truly interested in what they have to say.
- Listening holds teams together. By listening, you learn who your team members are and can determine when a problem is developing. When obstacles do arise, you know who to turn to for help and what solutions are acceptable.

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” -Stephen Covey

Active and Empathetic Listening

Both active and empathetic listening are required for listening to be effective.

Active Listening

- Rephrase what the speaker is saying to make sure you understand and let the speaker know that their message has been received.
- Do not make judgments, just listen.
- Avoid the trap of thinking about what to say next while others are speaking... just listen.

Empathetic Listening

- Empathetic listening is understanding more than just the words.
- Body language, tone of voice, emotional overtones are just as important as the words.
- Try to understand things from the speaker's point of view.
- This becomes easier the more you have listened to the person in the past.
- The emotional connection must be sincere.

Monitor Your Listening Level

- We are only humans.
- Our ability to listen is directly affected by our physical and mental state.
- Pay attention to how you respond when you are hearing something unpleasant, when the speaker is angry, if you are hungry, tired, hot, cold, etc.
- Be aware of your current situation. Energy level and interest are critical to maintain effective listening.
- If your listening abilities are starting to decrease, take a time out. Get some food, put on a sweater, cool your emotions, or take care of more pressing commitments.
- When it's not possible to delay, by monitoring your listening level, you can be aware of when you are not at your best and can make an effort to compensate.

Effective Listening can Calm Adversarial Situations

- Acknowledge, don't judge.
- Speakers respond to how others listen to them.
- Acknowledge but don't judge a person's complaints. Without enabling, complaints seem smaller and more manageable.
- "I got it...", "You saying that..." are appropriate responses.

WOOD BADGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



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- Telling the speaker you disagree with them is a fast way to end the conversation or, worse, make the speaker upset with you too.

Positives are Preferable to Negatives

- People who are upset often express with negatives.
- Try to structure a more positive framework for finding solutions by turning those negatives into positives.
- “I hear what you don’t want; now tell me what you do want,” is a good way to move away from negatives.

Positive Conversations Improve the Chances of Finding a Solution

- Conversations cast in a positive light naturally evoke more empathy and support than negative ones.
- The body language of the speaker and the listener become more open with positive conversations.
- Keep the conversation positive to improve the chances of finding a solution everyone can be happy with.
- “Listeners should strive to create a positive present as opposed to a negative past”

Feedback Helps Teams and Individuals Grow

- It is not easy to receive negative feedback about our work, but using effective listening can turn feedback into a positive situation.
- It is an essential part of team development, leadership, and friendship.

Tips for Giving Feedback

- Consider your motives. Feedback should always be helpful; otherwise, there is no reason to offer it.
- Find out if the other people involved are open to receiving feedback. Listen carefully, then rephrase what they say to be sure you understand them.
- Deal only with behavior that can be changed.
- Deal with specifics, not generalities.
- Describe the behavior; do not evaluate it.
- Let the other person know the impact the behavior has on you.
- Use an “I” statement to accept responsibility for your own perceptions and emotions.
- To make sure the recipients of feedback have understood your message in the way you intended it, ask them to rephrase what they heard you say.
- “You can give caring feedback without a good technique, but the slickest technique in the world will not hide a lack of caring”

Tips on Receiving Feedback

- Seek out feedback. It will nearly always provide you with information that will in some way help you improve your performance.
- Listen carefully. Receiving feedback requires a heightened awareness of yourself and the person offering the feedback.
- Listen actively. Restate the feedback in your own words so that the speaker knows that the message you are receiving is the same as the one the speaker intended to send.
- Listen empathetically. Put feedback in its proper context by observing the speaker’s body language, tone of voice, and emotions. Consider the speaker’s reasons for offering feedback.
- Notice how you are feeling when someone offers you feedback. Becoming angry or defensive can cloud your ability to listen effectively.
- Consider feedback to be a gift. It truly is.