

HOW TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

The key to being a good listener is to do nothing but listen. Put down the newspaper, turn off the TV, power down the computer and clear your mind of whatever running comments, rebuttals, criticisms or judgments that may be running around in there!

Be fully present to the speaker, mentally, physically and emotionally. This may take a little practice since multi-tasking has become all the rage, even during the most important conversations!

Listen with your mouth. Keep quiet without asking questions.

Listen with your eyes. Making eye contact is important. It opens the channel of communication and helps focus your mind.

Listen with your ears. Turn off the radio, TV or whatever other background noise that may be too distracting.

Listen with your hands. Keep your hands still without tapping your finger, shuffling papers or clasping them together.

Listen with your body. Our body language indicates our level of comfort. Keep your arms, hands and legs un-crossed. Sit still without fidgeting.

Listen with your mind. Keep an open mind, free of interrupting thoughts to allow yourself to fully focus on the person speaking.

Listen with your heart. Listening with your heart opens the door to communication at a deeper level. The person speaking will be sensitive to the heart signal' you are sending out. Keeping an open mind and an open heart will put the other person at ease.

Being a good listener is only one of the skills required of being a good communicator. When the other person has finished speaking is the time to ask questions and to give feedback to make sure the message you received is the same as the message that was given.

You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time." M. Scott Peck

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