

TOPIC:

METHODS TO IMPROVE

LISTENING SKILLS:

In today's society, the ability to communicate effectively is becoming increasingly important. Although the ability to speak effectively is a highly sought-after skill, developing effective listening skills is often not regarded in the same respect.

In fact, listening is just as important as speaking. Being a good listener helps solve problems, resolve conflicts, and improve relationships. In the workplace, effective listening contributes to fewer errors, less wasted time, and improved accuracy. Effective listening helps build friendships and careers.

Five ways to improve your listening skills

1. Face the speaker and give them your attention:

It is difficult to talk to someone who is constantly looking around. Make sure to face the speaker, maintain eye contact, and give them your undivided attention. In Western cultures, eye contact is necessary for effective communication. Although shyness, uncertainty, or cultural taboos may inhibit eye contact, try your best to make sure the speaker knows that they have your full attention.

2. Keep an open mind:

Do not judge or mentally criticize what the speaker is telling you. Doing so can compromise your ability to take in what is being said. Never exhibit judgmental behavior, as it compromises your effectiveness as a listener. You can evaluate what was said after the speaker is finished talking, but don't do so while you are still listening to them.

Let the speaker finish what they are saying and don't be a sentence-grabber:

Interrupting the speaker or prohibiting them from finishing what they are saying can indicate disrespect to the speaker. Often, interrupting the speaker mid-sentence interrupts their train of thought and can easily destroy a productive conversation.

3. Active listening

Active listening shows the speaker that you're interested and is an important business communication skill. Using active listening techniques helps to ensure that you correctly understand what is said.

Active listening techniques:

Paraphrasing back to the speaker what was said, to show understanding

Nonverbal cues (nodding, eye contact, etc.)

Verbal affirmations ("I understand," "I know," "Thank you," etc.)

Demonstrating concern and establishing rapport

4. Just listen:

Create a mental model of the information, whether it be a picture or an arrangement of abstract concepts. Listen to keywords and phrases and do not rehearse what you are going to say after the speaker is done talking. Think about what the other person is saying rather than what you are going to respond with. It is difficult to think of what you are going to say while also listening to the speaker. Be attentive and relaxed – don't get distracted by your own thoughts and feelings.

The Importance of Listening

Effective listening is a skill that is frequently undervalued in our society. Good communication skills require both effective speaking and listening. By being an attentive listener, you can understand more and improve relationships.

Make sure to:

Maintain eye contact and face the speaker to give them your attention

Don't be judgmental while listening

Don't interrupt the speaker

Employ active listening techniques

Think about what the other person is saying and not what you should respond with