Saturday, 7 December 2013

EFFECTIVE LISTENING 1.1



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"We were given two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking."

There is a real distinction between merely ***hearing the words*** and really ***listening for the message***. When we listen effectively we understand what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other person's own perspective. It is as if we were standing in the other person's shoes, seeing through his/her eyes and listening through the person's ears. Our own viewpoint may be different and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen, we understand from the other's perspective. To listen effectively, we must be actively involved in the communication process, and not just listening passively.



In **Passive Listening** we are genuinely interested in hearing and passively listen. We assume that we heard and understand correctly but stay passive and do not verify it. *Passive listening* is not much different from hearing. For instance, many of us have found ourselves in situations where our minds would drift, we would lose our motivation in listening, and consider the information we hear as "a background noise" or pretend that we're listening just "to be polite." We *think* that we *are* listening, but in fact we are simply letting this information go past our brain.

Active Listening is the single most useful and important listening skill. In active listening we are also genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes active listening and makes it effective. *Active listening* implies listening *with a purpose.* We might listen to *gain information* from the speaker, not just to "fill in the awkward silence." When listening actively, we obtain directions, pay attention to details, solve problems, get to know people, share interests, feelings, emotions, etc. In active listening

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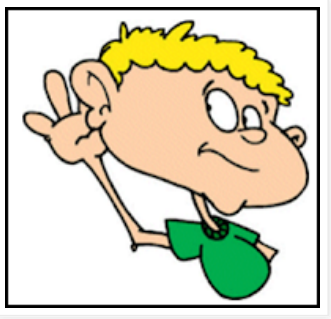


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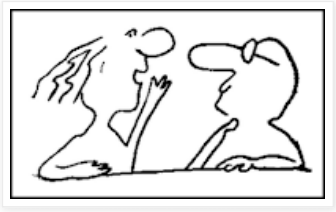
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we *engage* ourselves into the message that we hear, interact with it, *pay attention* to sounds, expressions, intonation, as well as *take note* of what we do *not* understand.





EXAMPLE: Passive listening is mechanical and effortless. It does not require any special effort. You hear what your teacher says and you might be able to tell the difference between major and minor points of the lecture, but that is about it. Lack of enthusiasm and a "careless" attitude during class characterize a student who is a passive listener. Active listeners, on the other hand, really concentrate on the content of the lecture and not on the lecturer or any random distractions in the room or their mind. They do more than focus on facts, figures, and ideas and actively associate the material presented with their own experiences. The content heard at every lecture is converted to something useful and meaningful for the student. You must pay special attention in class because, unlike when reading a textbook, you only get one chance to hear and understand the information presented to you.



note: People speak at 100 to 175 words per minute (WPM), but they can listen intelligently at 600 to 800 WPM. Since only a part of our mind is paying attention, it is easy to go into *mind drift* — thinking about other things while listening to someone. The cure for this is *active listening* — which involves listening with a **purpose.** It may be to gain information, obtain directions, understand others, solve problems, share interest, see how another person feels, show support, etc. It requires that the listener attends to the words and the feelings of the sender for understanding. ***It takes the same amount or more energy than speaking.*** It requires the receiver to hear the various messages, understand the meaning, and then verify the meaning by offering feedback.

[to be continued...]

Posted by Gaurav Misra at 21:03

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