

Characteristics of Ineffective and Effective Listeners

Ineffective Listener	Effective Listener
1. Tunes out the speaker, prejudices	1. Defers judgement, listens and observes for both information and feelings
2. Quick to mentally evaluate the speaker's grammar and speaking style	2. Emphasizes content and message of speaker
3. Attempts to talk when they should be listening	3. Listens attentively, non-verbals indicate this attentiveness, allows a pause after the speaker has seemed to finish before responding
4. Listens for errors to prove the speaker wrong	4. Listens for main ideas and de-emphasizes minor points
5. Attends to other matters while listening	5. Maintains attentive non-verbals
6. Easily tires	6. Asks for clarification and provides feedback when appropriate
7. Distracted by emotional words and lose their temper	7. Focuses on the main message and controls their anger
8. Unaware of talking/listening mismatch	8. Attempts to maintain balance between talking and listening
9. Is impatient and communicates a "get on with it" message	9. Maintains patience while listening

Things to Think About Effective Listening Behaviors and Thinking

1. Let the speaker finish what they are trying to say before you speak.
2. When the speaker hesitates, wait and give positive non-verbals before starting your reply.
3. Withhold judgement about the speaker's ideas until they have finished.
4. Listen attentively even when you are certain what the speaker is about to say.
5. Listen in a non-judgmental manner even if you do not like the person who is speaking.
6. Stop what you are doing and give full attention when listening.
7. Exhibit appropriate non-verbal cues to indicate you are listening.
8. Listen attentively regardless of the speaker's grammar, accent, and choice of words.
9. When appropriate, ask the speaker for clarification/restatement of ideas.