



# HOW TO BECOME A **GOOD LISTENER**

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**FOR TODAY'S  
LEADERS**



# GOOD

# LISTENING

Listening is one of the most powerful forms of communication. It requires someone's undivided attention. A common mistake is giving hearing and listening the same definition when, in fact, they are very different. Hearing is being present in the room but only catching bits and pieces of the information. On the contrary, listening involves actively paying attention to and, ultimately, engaging with and respecting the speaker.

## Listen Without Judgment

It is crucial to be willing to listen to what someone has to say, whether you agree with it or not. Opinions are never completely set in stone so it is important to always hear someone out. Even if you do end up disagreeing, you will have learned something from another point of view.

While in a leadership position of an organization, it is important you place value on every opinion. Regardless of their status within the company, their opinions and experiences are still valued. It is important to remember sometimes the measly, young intern may have a better idea than the CEO. Always take time to be open to conversation and willing to listen.

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**“IT TAKES A GREAT MAN  
TO BE A GOOD LISTENER”**

*-Calvin Coolidge*

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## Pay Close Attention

No one likes the person in the audience who is twiddling their thumbs, texting, drawing a picture, tweeting, talking to the person beside them, or making their grocery list. Whether you are having a one-on-one conversation or if it is in a group setting, it is imperative that you are focused and actively engaged with the person speaking to you.

The use of different nonverbal cues will demonstrate to the speaker you are listening to what they are saying. This could include nodding your head at their key points, repeating or parroting back key elements of the conversation and of course maintaining eye contact. You need to make sure you are giving the speaker the same amount of respect you would like to receive while you are talking.

## Seek Clarification

If you are confused about a statement or you want to know more, seek clarification! There is nothing wrong with asking a question or even requesting repetition. It forces you to stay engaged in the conversation and avoid receiving incorrect messages from the speaker. Sometimes failing to ask for clarification can be worse than not listening at all because it leads to miscommunication and ultimately confusion.

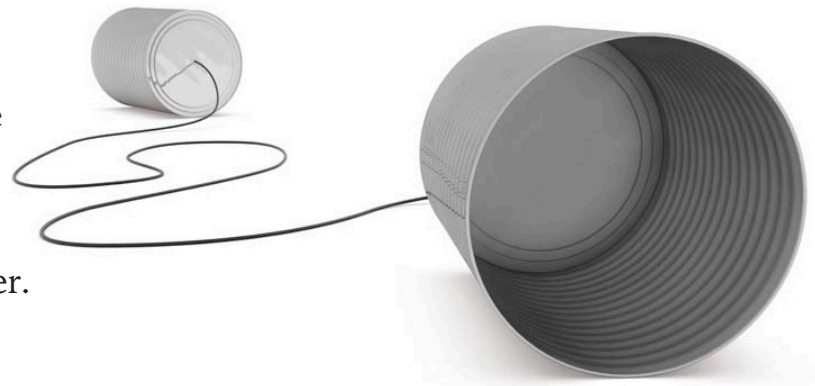
It is also good to repeat back to the speaker what you heard. This is called parroting. That is ultimately the best way to stay engaged in the conversation. Although this may seem tedious, it is good to take notes during meetings. It gives you something to look back on to clarify ideas, trigger thoughts and provides resources to follow up with in future meetings.

## Avoid Confusion

Everyone has been in a situation where someone or something has been left behind because of a miscommunication; from bags being left at the airport, to children not getting picked up from school. Listening is a crucial tool to take advantage of both inside and out of the workplace. It builds relationships and makes people feel important. Miscommunication occurs so easily yet recovering from it is very difficult. This is where listening needs to come into play. If everyone was a better listener then there would be significantly less communication errors.

Regardless if you are listening or speaking, communication is a two-way street. One cannot happen without the other. Active listening enhances and encourages communication. While actively listening, it is important to go into any conversation with an open mind and willing to listen to what they have to say. Even if you still disagree, you will have made the speaker feel respected and that is better than arguing about a differing in opinion.

Never be afraid to ask questions and request clarification. Everyone would rather leave knowing people were actively listening. Do all that you can in order to avoid confusion and your workplace will run significantly smoother. Remember, you are a team and it is important to listen to your teammates in order to achieve success.



“A good leader is a good listener”

