Listening with Purpose

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In Context: The Communication Process

Idea → Encode → Message → Decode → Meaning

“The logical result of communication is misunderstanding.”
Shapiro
Encoding and Decoding Variables

- Experiences
- Knowledge
- Beliefs
- Values
- Attitudes
- Culture
- Priorities

Message Complexity

- Facts
- Feelings
- Intention
- Desired Action
- Speaker’s Values

Human Variables  Message Interference
Message Perception

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“Words have no meaning – people have meaning.”

Barker

Improving the Communication Process

Source
-----
Receiver

Message

Message

Source
-----
Receiver
The weak link is the LISTENER

“Man’s inability to communicate is a result of his failure to listen.”
Carl Rogers

Becoming a great listener

1. Assign Importance

Listening is 50% of Your Job
Builds Relationships
Shows You Care
Universally Valued
Management’s “Unused” Skill
It’s 50% of Your Job

How did you feel?

What was your impression of your partner?

What did you want to do?

Builds Relationships

“Listening is a sign of respect. It makes people feel valued.”

Deborah Tanner

“Listening is a magnetic force...the people we move toward.”

Karl Menninger

“When someone listens...our spirits expand”

Sue Patton Thoele
Showing You Care

“Listening demonstrates genuine interest.”
Dr. R. Nichols

“A good listener is a silent flatterer.”
Proverb

“One who cares is one who listens.”
J. Richard Clarke

Universally Valued

“The most basic of human needs is to be understood.”
Dr. Ralph Nichols

“Who speaks, sows; Who listens, reaps.”
Argentina

“Every head is a world.”
Cuba

“If speaking is silver, then listening is gold.”
Turkey
Management's Unused Tool

“Intelligent listening is more persuasive than talking.”

Drs. Russell and Black

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

Stephen Covey

“To listen well is a powerful a means of influence.”

Chinese Proverb

2. Preparing to Listen

Listening is a conscious motivated choice

Clear purpose and an open mind

Bring questions and follow-up probes
Clearing Your Mind

An Exercise

1. **Purpose**...what am I trying to accomplish?

2. What “**clutter**” am I bringing to the conversation?

3. What can I do to **reduce** it?

Questions and Follow-Up Probes

1. Write them down
2. Create an easy opening question
3. Look at your questions and take notes
4. Use lots of follow-up probes ... *have a favorite*
5. Use pauses ... *don’t fear silence*

“**Questions are ‘the breath of life’ for a conversation.”**

James Nathan Miller
An Exercise

Write 3 interesting and easy questions you can use at home tonight to generate an interesting conversation:

(Hint: One of them is not, “How was your day?”)

3. Listening Skills

% of Time
Be Active
Be Patient … listen without “the intent to reply”

Selectivity and Reinforcement
Empathic Summary
Selectivity and Reinforcement

Selectivity … What I select out of all that I just heard

Reinforcement … What I reply to

How Selectivity and Reinforcement Work

Your selections and replies determine conversational direction
Empathic Summary

FACTS ... judged most relevant

PRIORITIES ... opinions, beliefs and feelings

ACTION ... if any, what and when

Empathy: An Example

“Bill, let me see if I understand. You’d like to decrease production scrap by 5% using the new Stanton Recovery Process. You believe success will depend on the second and third shift leaders’ attitudes toward the technical changes required. Is that about it?”

If actionable, “I will talk with both of them tomorrow and give you my best estimate of their intended support.”
Conclusion: Listening 1-2-3

1. Decide its important ... to your relationships, influence and success

2. Prepare ... a clear purpose, a patient mind and questions at the ready

3. Use your new skills ... Select, reinforce and an empathic summary

Thank You

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