

# The Art of Listening



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- ▶ Listening requires effort and self-awareness.
- ▶ Most people *hear* but aren't *listening*.
- ▶ Most people are really thinking about how they are going to reply or why they disagree with what is being said.



# The Art of Listening

There is science behind why listening is difficult.

1. Our brain can process words much faster than people talk which creates wait time.
2. Our brain also has a lag time between hearing something and processing it for understanding.

This extra time allow us to drift off, so we often get distracted by our own thoughts and opinions.

We pick out facts or aspects of the conversations that support our own beliefs, values, and perceptions.

If we feel negatively about something that is said, the time gives us the ability to start our defensive response and we stop listening altogether.

# The Art of Listening

Listening requires concentration but concentrating can be exhausting!

The first step is to create an environment conducive to listening so you can pay attention.

- ▶ Get rid of outside distractions.
- ▶ Put everything down (*yes, this includes your phone*)
- ▶ Get physically comfortable
- ▶ Relax and clear your mind

# How to Listen for Understanding

- ▶ Pay attention
  - Look at the person speaking
  - Notice their body language, does it match what they are saying or is there something not being said?
  - Take note of their tone of voice
- ▶ Listen with your body language
  - Turn toward the person talking
  - Lean in
  - Eye contact, smile, nod
  - Use leading sounds (“uh-huh”, “really..”, “go on..”, etc.)

# How to Listen for Understanding

- ▶ Don't interrupt
  - Wait until the person is done speaking before you ask questions or add your thoughts
- ▶ Don't judge or jump to conclusions
  - Keep your personal feelings out of the conversation unless requested
  - Never assume you know more about the situation than person speaking.

# How to Listen for Understanding

- ▶ Repeat what they said
  - Show them you heard them by repeating back a summary before adding your thoughts
  - Don't worry about details, concentrate on the big picture
  - Speak from their point of view without emotion or opinion
- ▶ Respond to what was said
  - Be honest and respectful
  - Respond appropriately for the situation (if they didn't ask for advice, don't give it!)
  - Talking down to someone (man-splaining) is never helpful
  - If you disagree, ask yourself why they believe their message. Put yourself in their shoes. Ask non-confrontational questions.

# And, Finally...

- ▶ Listening is a voluntary action, you have to focus and make the effort.
- ▶ **LISTEN** first
- ▶ **THINK** about what was said
- ▶ **SPEAK** last



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**QUIZ**