

Losing Out At Listening

By Joann Javons

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As a professional, you listen to others every day. I'm sure you spend a large percent of your time each day listening to others. Maybe 70% , 80% or more?

With all the time you are listening, how often have you thought about how well you listen? Most of us never consider if we're doing a good or poor job of listening. Ironic isn't it that with all the time we spend listening, we don't consider how good of a job we're doing?

Ever thought about how much you stand to lose if you don't listen well? Not listening well does cost. It costs you in time, effort, and information. Sometimes it even costs people their relationships.

Missing out on information that you may need to know is one way poor listening costs you. Even a casual conversation often contains important information. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone, but not really there? You tuned in and out of the conversation only to discover a short time later that that person said something that you absolutely needed to know. So, you had to phone him to have him repeat something he had already told you and may have felt embarrassed about doing so. Poor listening cost you time, effort, and maybe some embarrassment as well.

Listening well is about information but it's also about your relationships. Just think, for a moment, of a time when you felt truly listened to. I bet you felt valued, appreciated, that person cared. Wouldn't you prefer to do business with someone who made you feel that way?

So, let's check out where you are on some listening traps that people fall into. Doing any of these things will take you out of listening and cost you. Get clear on which of these behaviors you do so you can take back your power to listen fully and completely.

Listed below are some listening behaviors that reduce listening effectiveness. Read the list and place a check mark () next to any of your personal pitfalls.

____1. I approach listening situations without clearing my mind or taking steps to prevent interruptions or distractions.

____2. I engage in other activities (e.g. opening mail, working on the computer) while I'm listening.

____3. I assume I know what others will say and tune out as a result.

- ___4. I finish sentences for others when they stumble or pause.
- ___5. I fidget when people speak too slowly or when their conversation becomes boring.
- ___6. I become impatient and tune others out when they say things that I don't agree with or don't want to hear.
- ___7. I form a rebuttal in my mind while others are talking.
- ___8. I ignore nonverbal cues such as voice, tone, posture, and pace.
- ___9. I act as if I understand what people are saying rather than risk embarrassment by asking them to repeat themselves or clarify a point.
- ___10. I dwell on aspects of others that have no bearing on conversation (e.g. clothing, mannerisms, etc.)

Many of these behaviors many people do all the time! But you can take back your power to listen effectively. Choose your top 3 items from the list above and make a commitment to turn those items around. The key is taking care of your needs so that your mind doesn't wander, you don't waste your time by pretending your listening or you keep your mind from wandering. Ask yourself: 'What can I do to take care of my needs so I am totally present while the person is talking?' How can I turn this specific behavior around?'

"When you think about it, to change your life you don't have to make a massive shift. Just a few little things every day can transform you into the person you want to be." Excerpt from: One Minute Millionaire, Mark Victor Hansen and Robert Allen

As a coach and consultant, Joann provides marketing tips and resources for professionals through <http://www.AttractClients.com> , and <http://www.private-practice-marketing.com> . Her full bio is at: http://attractclients.com/sample_articles.html#aboutus

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