



8 WAYS TO LISTEN BETTER

What does it take to become a good listener? Hearing is a physical ability whereas listening is a skill that can be developed with practice. Becoming someone who properly attends to a conversation can help you improve and maintain good relationships. Try these eight ideas and notice the difference they can make to the quality of your listening.

01

EMBRACE SILENCE

When somebody else is talking, focus on hearing their words. Avoid jumping in with your thoughts. It shows respect and will encourage the speaker to share their thoughts fully. Then you can ask questions and clarify your understanding.



02

RELAX AND OPEN YOUR MIND

Take some deep breaths and relax. Enjoy the sensation of listening. Be curious about what is said and notice how it lands with you. Put other thoughts out of your mind and concentrate on what is being communicated. Take time to be interested in the other person and their viewpoint. It will make all the difference to the quality of the conversation.



03

PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE

Show that you welcome their thoughts. Inspire confidence to share what is on their mind by being respectful of their needs and concerns. You might nod, smile or use words that encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact with a soft gaze. Show how you are making an effort to listen and understand what you have heard.



04

BE RESPECTFUL

Give the speaker your undivided attention. Put your phone on silent or divert calls. Suppose the conversation is taking place via a video call, close Outlook and any other apps to avoid unnecessary interruptions. You will find that the conversation goes so much better when both parties experience focused attention.



05

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Look at issues from their perspective. Being non-judgmental will help you absorb what is said, and objectively consider the consequences. If you disagree, then make a note and come back to it when it is your turn to speak. Conversations can get derailed due to misunderstanding. Check your knowledge by playing back what you believe to be the issues.



06

BE IMPARTIAL

Everybody has a different way of speaking. Give the speaker time to think and complete their what they want to say. Some people like to pace while talking, and others want to sit still. Focus on what is being conveyed rather than critique the mode of delivery.



07

PAY ATTENTION

Listen for pitch and intonation when someone speaks to you. It will help you develop empathy as the effort means you will carefully attend their words. Make an effort to notice volume, speed and tone in the speaker.



08

REFLECT AND SUMMARISE

Use breaks in a speech to reflect what you hear by paraphrasing key points as this helps build rapport. It doesn't mean that you agree with everything said. Only that you are demonstrating how you are listening to their viewpoint. Reflecting enables you to remember the crucial points and makes summing up more natural at the end of the conversation.

