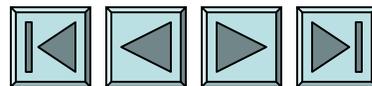




The Art of Listening

***Based on Tony Buzan "The Power of Social Intelligence",
Thorsons, 2002, Chapter 2, pp.28-42***

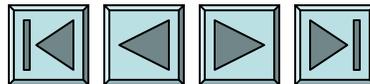




**“We are interested in others
when they are interested in us”**

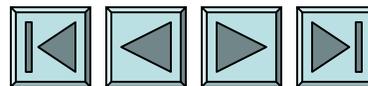


Publius Syrus, Roman Poet



The best, easiest and most effective way of showing interest is:

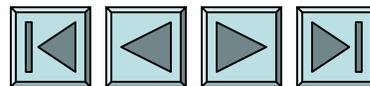
- To listen to what they are saying
- *Really* listen,
- Focusing on what they are saying,
- As opposed to planning our own reposts and anecdotes





“Most people listen without hearing”

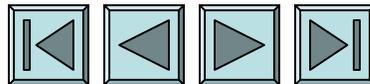
Leonardo da Vinci



Listening - a neglected art

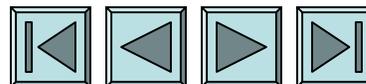


- We spend between 50 and 80 percent of our waking life communicating
- On average, half of that communication time is spent in listening.
- Despite all this, listening is the “poor relation” of communication training.



As seen in table below, listening is learned first and used most, but taught least.

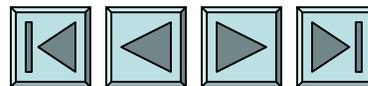
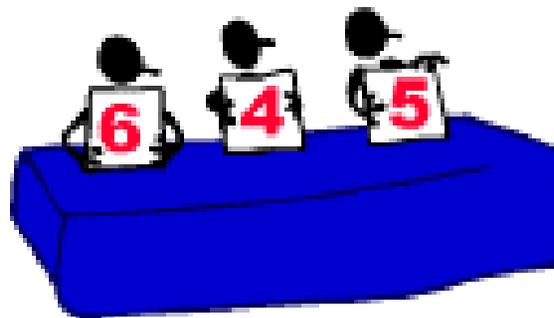
Learned	Used	Taught
Listening 1st	Most (45%)	Least
Speaking 2nd	Next most (35%)	Next least
Reading 3rd	Next least (16%)	Next most
Writing 4th	Least (9%)	Most

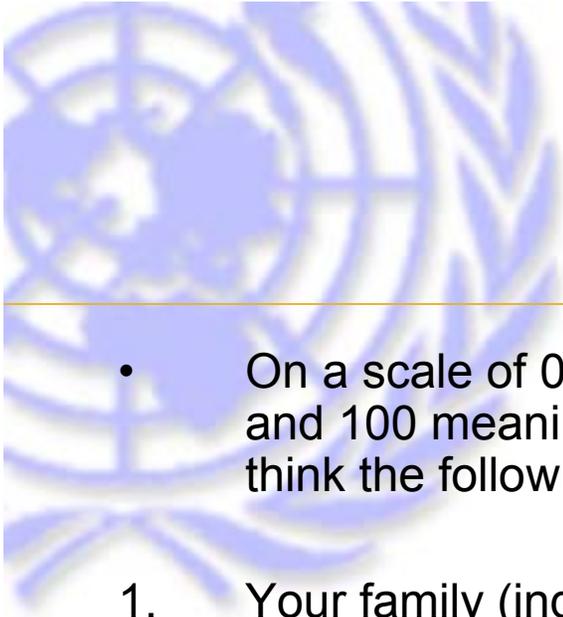


Self-Check 1

- How do you rate yourself as a listener?
- On a scale of 0-100, with 0 representing the worst listener imaginable, and 100 meaning that you listen better than anybody else,
- How well do you think you listen to people?

(The average rating is 55. Only a tiny 5 percent score themselves in the 80-90 range.)





Self-Check 2

- On a scale of 0-100, with 0 representing the worst listener imaginable, and 100 meaning that you listen better than anybody else, how do you think the following people would rate you as a listener?

1. Your family (individual or group average) -----
2. Your best friend -----
3. Your other friends -----
4. Your boss -----
5. Your colleagues -----
6. People you supervise -----

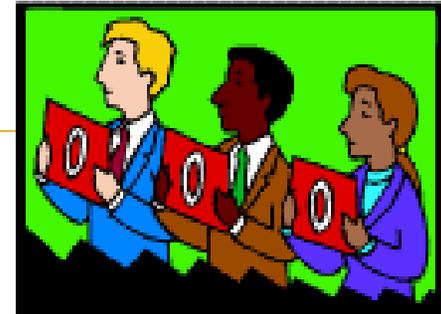


(Most people believe that their best friends would give them a high rating. People rate their boss as giving them the second-highest listener rating. Scores for family members range widely. ***The ratings which people thought their spouse or partner would give their listening skills tend to decline in inverse proportion to the number of years they have been together. There is a moral in there***



Bad Listening Habits

1. Pretending to pay attention when you are not
2. Trying to do other things while listening
3. Deciding the subject is uninteresting
4. Getting distracted by the speaker's way of speech, or other mannerisms
5. Getting over-involved and thus losing the main thread of the arguments or thoughts
6. Letting emotion-filled words arouse personal anger and antagonism
7. Concentrating on any distractions instead of what is being said
8. Taking linear, one-colour notes
9. Listening primarily for facts
10. Avoiding anything that is complex or difficult

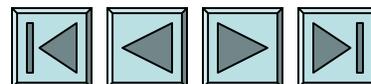


Of which bad listening habits are you guilty of? Make a note of where your weaknesses lie, and where you can do most to improve your listening skills.



Active Listening

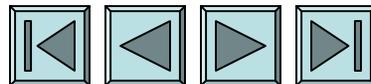
- Listening is not a passive activity
- It is not the 'unexciting' or 'unflamboyant' part of the conversation
- Listening **well** is the vital ingredient in a successful, productive and interesting conversation





*“Drawing on my fine command
of language, I said nothing.”*

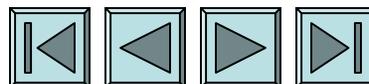
Robert Benchley



You must listen not only to a person's words,

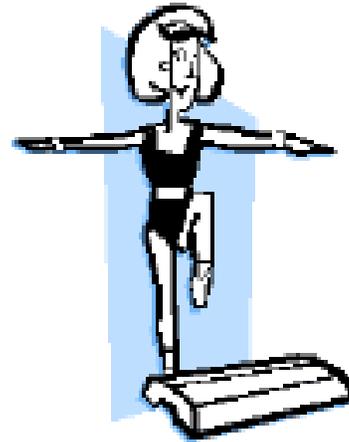
- You must be aware of the other person's body language as well.
- This way, we can listen to what they *feel* as well as what they say.

"I know that you believe that you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant!!"

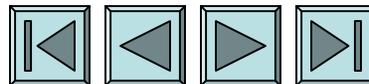




Social Workout

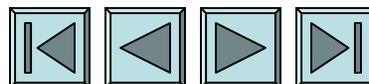


that will enhance your listening



Be Aware of Body Language

- Listening to the words spoken as well as the body language will make you a 'whole' rather than a 'part' listener
- Be aware of your own body language too
- Your own body-language part in the conversation will also have a significant impact on you and your perceptions.
- If you are bored, and act bored, your speaker will become even boring!
- If you are bored, and act more interested, the speaker will become more interesting
- It is you who helps create the dullness or excitement of whatever you are listening to.



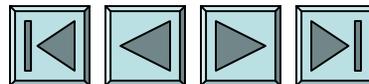
Tune-in and Train Your Mind to Focus

- Focus on what you want – not what you don't want
- If you think about how much the distractions are interfering with your concentration, you will magnify them, and they will interfere all the more!
- If you increasingly focus on who and what you are listening to, you will magnify that sound and fade to nothingness all the background noise.



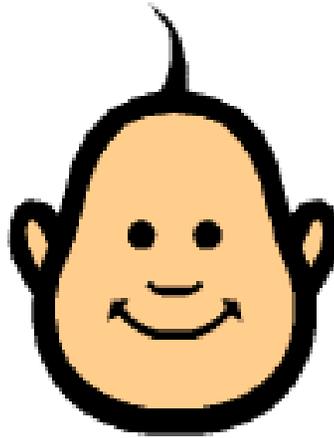
- Play listening games in your daily life. When you are out walking, 'tune-in' to the different 'sound stations' around you – the bird channel, the human voice channel, the traffic channel, the rain channel, and so on.
- Try to isolate only those sounds you want to hear; you will become adept at filtering out unwanted noise.
- You will strengthen your listening skills and gain a much wider and greater appreciation of the surround-sound world in which you live.

Remember how a mother can hear her baby's faint cry above the roar of the madding crowd!

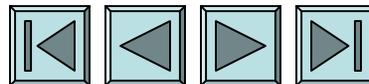


The 2:1 Ratio

- Remember that you have two ears and one mouth – not the other way around!
- Next time you are in an appropriate social situation, try to listening for twice as long as you speak.



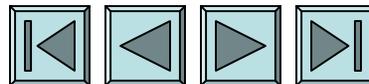
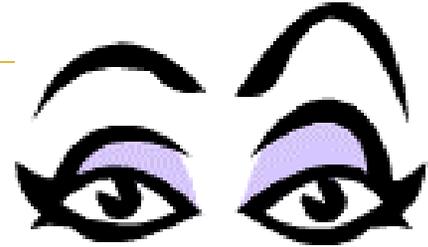
- Your Social Intelligence will receive a big boost if you manage this.
- **“The wiser the person the less they speak and the more they listen.”**





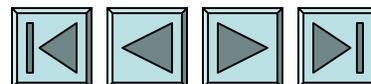
The Eyes Have It!

- Eye contact is the fundamental part of establishing and showing interest and yet it is often neglected.
- It does not mean that you should not stare into the the other person's eyes for the entire course pf the conversation.
- A warm glance every so often will indicate that you are still interested in the conversation, and therefore interested in the other person.



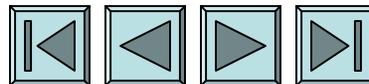
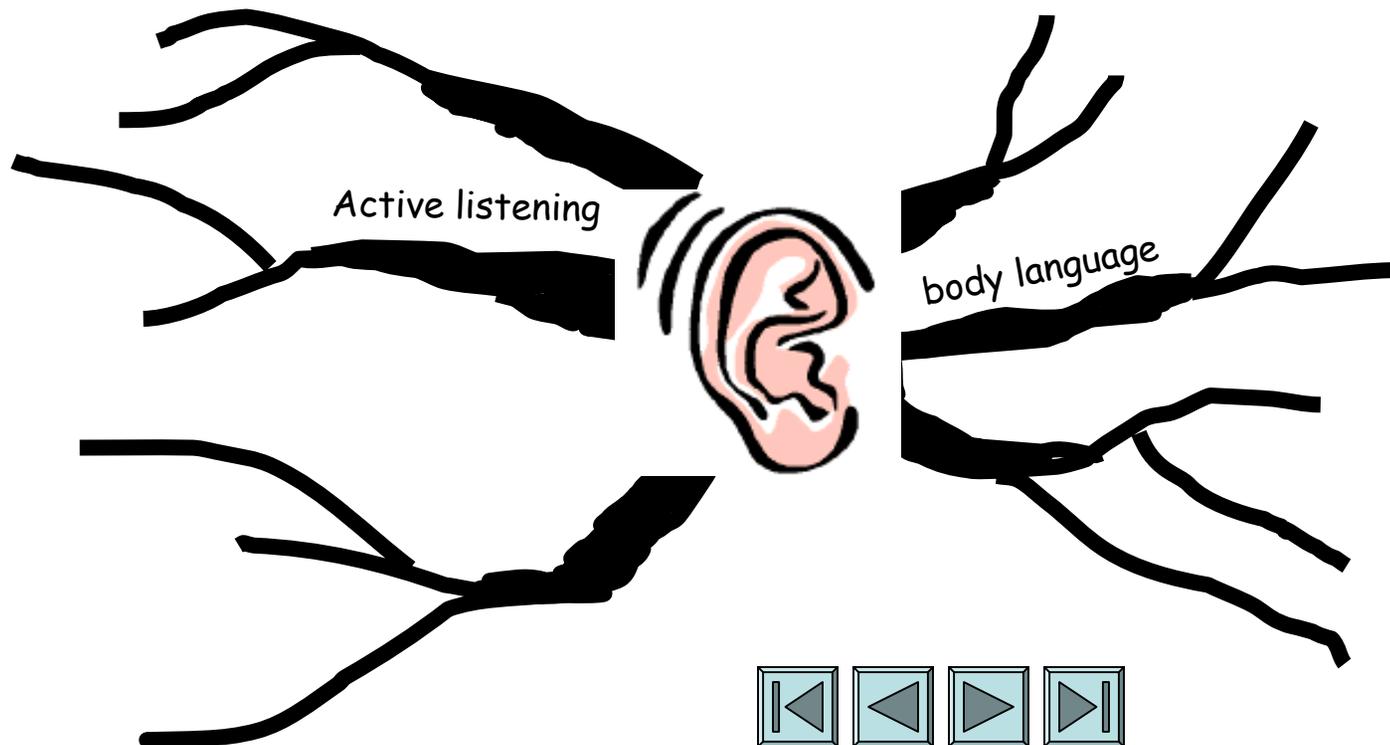
Mind Map[®] as You Listen

- Many people doodle when they are listening to a talk or presentation.
- Rather than being a distraction, doodling can actually help concentration.
- A Mind Map[®] is an organized doodle can be very useful.
- They are very easy to construct . All you need is a sheet of paper.
- They use words and pictures to create associations in your brain.



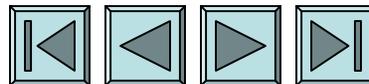
An example of a Mind Map

Imagine that you are listening to a talk on 'The Art of Listening'. This main subject is represented by an ear. (See below) Radiating from this central image, you can draw some branch like lines, and print on each important element of the listening art for e.g., 'body language', or 'active listening'. From each of these initial branches, you would radiate off others, developing each concept.



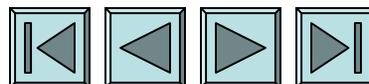
Listen With an Open Mind

- It is very easy to get distracted by words that trigger negative emotions.
- They are only words, and try to look at them more objectively.
- By developing your listening skills, you can relate to others and understand them far more fully than if you get tangled up in emotional disagreements.



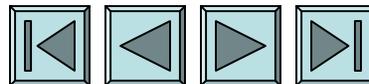
Use Your Brain Speed

- Your brain can think at between 4 and 10 times the speed of speech.
- This means that when you are listening, you have lots of spare time to use your extra 'brain time.'
- Think 'on your feet', and pay attention to the person's body language, listening to meaning between the lines.



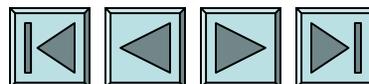
Judge Content, Not Delivery

- Focus on content of what is being said.
- Try not to criticize and negatively judge any inadequacies in delivery and style the speaker might have.
- Your negativity will see shown in your body language and will be picked up by others around you.
- Concentrate on the content.



Listen For the Big Ideas

- Many people listen only for facts and end up not being able to see the wood for the trees.
- Listen for the big themes, and you will feel more confident and stress free.
- You will also much more readily be able to slot the facts into their appropriate places, like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, and understand the conversation more easily.



Social Brain Boosters

- All my listening skills are improving
- I am listening with an open mind
- I am increasingly interested in all subjects.

