

# Listen with deep fascination

**O**f all the skills taught during your school years or the adult training, listening is probably the one that is the most overlooked. Being a good communicator is generally equal to being a good speaker. However, an old saying emphasizes that since we have two ears and one mouth, we should listen twice as much as we speak. Therefore being a good communicator starts with being a good listener.

When somebody speaks, directly to you or to a group, this person wants to deliver a message, to express a feeling, or to voice out her thoughts. If we do not pay attention to this person, we may just hear the words and not what she has to say and will ourselves communicate to her that she's not worthy of our attention.

This frequently starts a chain reaction of miscommunication, which will end by misunderstandings, wrong decisions, and potentially conflicts.

By listening and paying attention to the speaker, we hear what she says, we see what she does, we feel what she expresses, we can fully understand the message, and ask clarifying questions if needed. When we listen, we are in the other's people shoes.

However, our current world has created so many distractions that we have lost the ability to listen with deep fascination. Reflect the latest seminar you attended

or the last meeting you held: How long before you watched your cell phone, how long before you started to chat with your neighbor, how long before you peeked at your laptop to read the last email?

Think about the last discussion with your spouse: How long before you interrupted because you disagreed or wanted to make your point? These are common examples of our lack of listening skills.

So how to sharpen your listening skills. Here are some tips that will help you:

Take notes, using your own words and style.

Ask questions. This is an excellent way to get involved and become part of the discussion. There is a caveat though: do not interrupt the speaker, ask for permission to ask your question and wait!

Observe body movement and gesture, they are good indicators of feelings.

Smile and thank the speaker at the end. If appropriate, share your observations and offer advices.

Listening is not a given and has to be practiced. By becoming a good listener, you will become a better speaker and team player. Want to polish your listening skills? Join a Port-Louis Toastmasters Club meeting by contacting the executive team at [pttoastmastersexecutive@googlegroups.com](mailto:pttoastmastersexecutive@googlegroups.com).

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