

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: LISTENING

Listen With Style

Just as you have a style of speaking, you also have a style or styles with which you gather information and perceptions. At TLC, we call these Listening Modes, because it is the manner or method that you use when listening.

IMPATIENT LISTENERS

Impatient Listeners. While being called an impatient listener may sound negative, it just means they are in a hurry to receive your information. They are quick to arrive at conclusions, willing to take risks and are focused on the bottom line. Their goal is to quickly understand and just as quickly arrive at solutions. They want the big picture without the details.

Because they seldom have the patience to remain silent for long, it is to your advantage to get the facts to them at the front end of the conversation. This can prevent them from interrupting you to ask very focused and closed questions to obtain the information they seek. Don't save the best for last because they are also quick decision makers. If you have five reasons you want the Impatient Listener to consider, narrow the list and give them the best three.

If you are an Impatient Listener, you will benefit from setting aside more time for listening. If the speaker begins off-task, listen for an opportunity to smoothly steer the conversation to the desired topic. You can even ask them to give you a quick overview of the key data. Ask for details in writing to save you some listening time.

IMPRESSIONABLE LISTENERS

These are listeners who are influenced by a combination of information, opinion, and entertainment. They make quick decisions based on feelings more than facts. While they may not interrupt the speaker, they are masters at gaining control of the conversation and end up talking more than they listen. They want the big picture with the stories and examples included.

You will want to get them involved emotionally as soon as possible. Their excitement or buy-in is key to getting them involved in your topic. Ask them open questions so they can contribute to the conversation.

Allowing them to co-create with you is part of the process they enjoy.

If you are an Impressionable Listener, listen more and talk less. Pay attention to the facts and ask the speaker to give examples. Refrain from turning every listening opportunity into a social engagement. Taking brief notes will keep you focused.

INTEGRITY LISTENERS

These listeners want time to warm up to you and your ideas. They may show little response and it can be difficult to read them. Their goal is to assess the sincerity of the speaker and the believability of the message. They are slower to make decisions and they dislike being rushed.

When talking to Integrity Listeners, give your information in a logical and sequential format. Give enough details to help them to understand your message. Spend a little time up front getting to know them. Don't come across too smooth or rehearsed.

If you are an Integrity Listener, make sure people you communicate with have set aside time for the conversation rather than having impromptu talks in the hall. If the message seems disorganized, use paper and pen to organize what you hear. Ask open questions to gather more information. Let people know when you will get back to them.

INFORMATIVE LISTENERS

These individuals focus in great detail on the task at hand. They may ask tough questions and dig deeply into a minute area of the topic. If they hear misinformation, they will likely shut down and de-value what you have to say. Their goal is to judge the validity of the information. They tend to reach decisions slowly because they fear making errors. When speaking to an Informative Listener, get your facts straight. It is okay to use notes. It's better to be accurate than showy. Be prepared for detailed questions. Offer to send them additional information.

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on When It's Your Turn to Talk.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our [Focusing on Solutions](#) or read other [previous issues](#) of The Exchange.

"It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

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Unlike most people, they will read it. If you don't know an answer to a question, tell them when you will get that information to them. Never create answers.

If you are an Informative Listener, consider reducing the amount of verbal information that you normally request. Stop other activities while you are listening and give eye contact to the speaker. Ask questions about risk factors to put your mind at ease. ♦

What Our Clients Are Saying

Vincent, thank you for the communication training in helping me prepare for my oral examination. I passed! All three of my judges said I was phenomenal! I owe it all to you! Thank you Vincent. I could not have done it without you.

Sarah Harrison,
Executive Director
Downtown Dalton Development Authority

Focus Your Listening

Vincent Ivan Phipps

TLC teaches there are three levels of listening. Before you improve listening overall, you must first understand level one, Listening to Focus.

Focus is the dynamic of listening that is the foundation of effective communication and leadership. This is often the area that is overlooked resulting in poor listening and ineffective leadership.

Level One: Focus, has three components:

1. Maintaining Eye Contact. Clients have asked me, "What does giving eye contact have to do with listening?" I tell them, "About half of effective listening is effective looking!"

Place yourself 3-5 feet from the person with whom you are talking. When you are speaking and you notice the other person's eye contact dropping, their listening is probably dropping too! Considering body language makes up 55% of interpersonal communication, it is essential to recapture their eye contact. Pause, or ask a quick question. This will get them looking at you so they can see your interest. Make sure you are looking at them when they are talking. This gives you the opportunity to look for subtle changes in their facial expressions, posture, body language, and the use of hand gestures.

These changes can indicate how open the other person is to what is being said. Microflashes in the

face can indicate their level of understanding. Looking at the other person gives you the advantage of knowing how and when to modify what you are saying.

2. Use Neutral Comments. These are those guttural throat sounds we use in conversations that are our way of saying, "please keep talking." They sound like this, "Uh-huh, hmm, ok, all right, oh, well, huh." If we use these while listening, the other person will feel as if you are interested and want to know more. You will get credit for being a great conversationalist without even saying a real word. Make sure you say neutral comments without emotion.

When you use neutral comments, remember to nod your head slowly while maintaining eye contact. If you nod too fast, it will seem to the other person that you want them to speed up and conclude the conversation. This is counterproductive when establishing positive listening.

Time your neutral comments appropriately. If you give an "uh – huh" every 5 seconds, it can become annoying. Typically insert a neutral comment after they pause or after they've said a long phrase.

3. Insert pauses. Allow silence to be a part of the conversation. Use pauses before answering questions. Use pauses before responding. Use pauses to gather your thoughts. The average person processes words at 500 words/minute. They only speak at 150 words/minute. This means that if you give yourself a few seconds to think before speaking, it enables you to strategically select the best word to compliment the silence and whatever you say next will be more on point.

Pausing can give you instant positive credit for being a good listener. Let's look at this scenario:

Someone asks your advice. It is about an important and serious issue. This issue involves them personally. You know the answer. In fact, you know the answer so well that others have commended you on your answer to this question before. If you respond quickly, speaking as soon as, or even before, the other person stops talking, you will not get credit for being a good listener.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Postpone listening by giving the person an exact date and time when you can follow up with them.
- ✓ Ask a question to continue listening, such as, "What will you do next?"
- ✓ Demonstrate positive posture for listening: lean back, cross legs, tilt your head and give eye contact combined with small head nods.

"A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.."

Wilson Mizner

"Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen."

Margaret J. Wjeatley

"Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly."

Plutarch

"The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people."

Woodrow Wilson

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The other person will feel as if you did not understand or respect their point of view. They will assume they were annoying you. They will feel as if their comment was invalid and that they should not have even bothered you. In the future, they will avoid sharing anything of importance due to the abruptness of your answer.

If you pause 2-3 seconds, and insert some neutral comments from step 2, you will get total credit for being a good listener. Your answer will be well received due to its paralleled good delivery. You will be seen as insightful, wise, and supportive. Boy, what a difference 2-3 seconds can make.

Begin your Level One: Listening to Focus, today.

To learn more about Listening Levels Two (Listening to Understand) and Listening Level Three (Listening Beyond), please contact TLC@talklisten.com. ♦

Happy Birthday!

TLC wishes a Happy Birthday to clients celebrating in November!

- » Margaret Carton
- » Scott Trost
- » Debbie Franke
- » Tommy Beckler
- » Brian Korkus
- » Wilson Harvey
- » Vincent Russo
- » Greg Laudeman
- » Randy Hall
- » Marian Adamson
- » Eric Norden
- » Paul Veraart
- » Jeff Hathcock
- » Sheila Nelson
- » Robert L. Henry
- » Billy Caruso
- » Tom Sutter
- » Randy Crowder

Featured Service: The Listening Challenge

What is The Listening Challenge?

A free, interactive, 60-minute workshop that quickly and accurately measures the listening abilities of you and your team. You receive practical and effective tips to immediately improve listening.

What Does The Listening Challenge Measure?

Beverly Inman-Ebel, MS, CCC-SLP, author of *Talk is NOT Cheap*, is CEO of Talk Listen Communicate, LLC. She created a bi-hemisphere auditory assessment for professionals. The listening test measures two dynamics of listening:

A. Verbal Content: scores how well you listen for words.

B. Nonverbal Content: scores how well you listen for emotions.

What is the format of The Listening Challenge?

- A. Discuss the importance of listening.
- B. Examine the amount of training we receive in the four major communication areas versus how much time the average professional receives on improvement.
- C. Take a video-recorded, self-scoring listening test.
- D. Get immediate results measuring how well you listen.
- E. Learn quick and practical tools to improve.

Who facilitates The Listening Challenge?

Vincent Ivan Phipps, BS Speech/Language Communication, is your trainer. He is an eleven-year Senior Communication Coach. Vincent is an award winning international trainer and speaker. His presentation philosophy is, "If I can make you to laugh, I can help you listen. If I can help you listen, I can help you learn. If I can help you learn, I can help you change."

How does The Listening Challenge help my team?

- » Identifies specific areas of listening weakness.
- » Obtains measurable results of how well you listen.
- » Uncovers shortcomings affecting customer service, sales, teamwork, and leadership.
- » Provides understanding of the three levels of listening and what it takes to improve.

"There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to say themselves."

Albert Guinon

"No man ever listened himself out of a job."

Calvin Coolidge

"Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening."

Dorothy Sarnoff

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Leo Buscaglia

"Many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request."

Phillip Stanhope

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What if I want my team to take The Listening Challenge?

1. Contact TLC, 423-622-TALK or TLC@talklisten.com
2. Tell the number of attendees.
3. Select the dates you would like to receive The Listening Challenge.

Please schedule at least two weeks in advance. Due to the high cost of time and travel, The Listening Challenge is only available to customers in the greater Chattanooga, TN area unless we are already providing services in a city near you. Please contact us to see when we might be able to provide the challenge, or to be placed on a callback list.

Why is TLC offering this free service?

We continue to collect research on listening. We want to know how well people listen. It also gives us the

Chief Executive's Opinion

Beverly Inman-Ebel

"THE LESSONS OF LISTENING"

There may not be an "I" in team, but there are two of them in listening. It is so important to keep your two eyes on the speaker, as Vincent mentioned in his article, "Focus Your Listening". Using your ears alone is just not enough.

Effective listening requires that every fiber of your being be involved. It's hard work. Listening is so much more than refraining from talking that it can be exhausting. I can give a keynote to hundreds of people and leave energized. I can spend a couple of hours facilitating a meeting and be so tired that I need to replenish myself before I can give any more of me. I find that most worthy tasks take time and energy. Listening is certainly a worthy task.

I was at a client's location in Nebraska last July. Part of my time there was to complete a 360 review. I spent about 30 minutes with each person that I met. One question I asked was, "How would you describe the culture of your company?" One woman told me that she really liked that she was heard. When I asked for an example, she replied, "You. Now. You are listening to me and even though you don't have the authority to make changes, I feel better just because I can tell you are really listening. Since the company sent you, I know they care."

What resonated with me was that it was important to her just to be heard. I have found that to be so true. It is not necessary to do what people ask; it is essential to listen to what people say. Being willing to listen is not an obligation to give in or make a change, although when we truly listen our opinions often alter due to a new perspective.

Just last week, I was scheduled for an important conference call with a client out west. Another participant in the call was at my conference room and he suggested that we get the other person to start talking. He said, "I need to know what her needs are." What a great fit! In any sales call, it is imperative to listen more than you talk. I knew at that moment that the agreement to partner on this conference call was a good one.

How about you? Are you partnering with people who recognize the value of listening first? You can follow a listener or set the pace and be one yourself. Don't just listen to be polite. Listen to learn. People usually reveal more than they intended when they have a good listener around. That information, when applied, can be very advantageous and powerful.

So get ready. Eat some carbs before listening because it is an active sport. Really focus and ask questions that will get the other person talking. Gather what you hear and discern the lesson. Focus. Ask. Discern. Live your dreams! ♦

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words"

Rachel Naomi Remen

"I always begin my prayer in silence, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is the friend of silence—we need to listen to God because it's not what we say but what He says to us and through us that matters.."

Mother Teresa

"Bore, n.: A person who talks when you wish him to listen."

Ambrose Bierce

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TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by e-mail tlc@talklisten.com or phone 1-888-232-2873. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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