

FIFTEEN TIPS FOR GOOD LISTENING

1. **STOP TALKING!**
You cannot listen if you are talking.
2. **TRY TO EMPATHIZE WITH THE PERSON WHO IS SPEAKING**
Try to put yourself in the other person's place so you can see his or her point of view more clearly.
3. **PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE, SHOW THE PERSON YOU WANT TO LISTEN**
Help the person feel free to talk. Look at the speaker, look and act interested. Remove distractions, and show respect and courtesy.
4. **LEAVE YOUR EMOTIONS BEHIND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**
Problems and anxiety can prevent you from listening well. Try to put them aside. Keep your attention focused on the present conversation as much as possible. (Many people spend much of their time brooding about past conversations or worrying about future consequences of the present conversation.)
5. **AVOID CLASSIFYING THE SPEAKER**
It is very common to classify someone as a certain type and then try to fit everything the person says into what we think makes sense coming from "that type of person". This "pigeon-holing" is dangerous. People are unpredictable and do not easily fit into classifications we may assign them. Recognize your own biases, and try to adjust for them.
6. **AVOID MAKING ASSUMPTIONS**
Do not assume anything about the speaker's goals, feelings, or motives. Do not assume the person understands the situation in the same way that you do, or that they have the same information or knowledge that you have.
7. **CONCENTRATE ON WHAT IS BEING SAID, AND DO NOT ARGUE MENTALLY**
Actively focus your attention on what is being said. It is more difficult to understand what the other person is really saying if you are arguing mentally. Listen to understand rather than to oppose. Avoid concentrating mainly on what it is you are going to say next.
8. **RESPOND TO THE IDEAS RATHER THAN REACTING TO THE PERSON**
Try not to let your reactions to the person influence your interpretation of the ideas presented. The ideas may be excellent, even if you do not like the person. Conversely, a bad idea may seem like a good one if you think highly of the person presenting it. It is so easy for "emotional censoring" to take place.

