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. .10 Most Common. . Barriers to Effective Listening

1. Calling the subject uninteresting.
2. Criticizing the speaker's delivery.
3. Getting overstimulated.
4. Listening only for the facts.
5. Trying to make an outline.
6. Faking attention to the teacher or instructor.
7. Tolerating or creating distractions.
8. Using difficult expository or technical material.
9. Letting emotional - laden words throw us out of tune with the speaker.
10. Wasting the differential between speech speed and the thought speed.

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Commandments for Good Listening

1. Stop Talking

You cannot listen if you are talking.

2. Put the Talker at Ease

Help him or her feel free to speak. This is often called a *permissive environment*.

3. Show You Want to Listen

Look and act interested. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.

4. Remove Distractions

Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?

5. Empathize

Try to put yourself in the speaker's place, so that you can see their point of view.

6. Be Patient

Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don't start for the door or walk away.

7. Hold Your Temper

An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words.

8. Go Easy on Argument & Criticism

This puts the speaker on the defensive. They might "clam-up" or get angry. Do not argue--even if you win, you lose.

9. Ask Questions

This tells the speaker that you are listening and are interested in what they are saying.

10. Stop Talking

This is first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. You cannot do a good listening job while you are talking.

Nature gave humans two ears, but only one tongue, which is a gentle reminder that we should listen more than we talk.

>> The Real Reasons Why We Don't Listen

We think we already know: We're so sure we know what the speaker is going to say that we listen with just "half an ear."

We're looking, not listening: How often in introductions has a person's name failed to penetrate because your mind was occupied with its owner's appearance or mannerisms? For the same reason and far more often than you may suspect, other information fails to register.

We are busy listeners: We try to listen while giving part of our attention to a newspaper or a radio or TV program. Outside noises will also clamor for a share of our attention. No wonder we don't really "hear."

We miss the big idea: The poor listener "just hears words." Have you ever had the feeling that a speaker said a lot, but you didn't quite "get" it all? That may have been the speaker's fault, or perhaps you have not learned to look for the main ideas and the important supporting details.

Our emotions make us deaf: Do you recall a speech or conversation that got you riled up? How well did you listen once your blood started to boil? We mentally stop receiving while we plan our verbal counter-attack.

Six Steps to Better Listening

1. Learn to Concentrate: It's an important factor in listening. Practice such games as "Take 2 plus 3, minus 5, plus 4, minus 6 -- what's the answer?" Similar exercises are used in courses for listening training.

2. Run a TV Test: With a friend or relative listen to a radio or television talk. See how many of the ideas presented you can recall.

3. Cut Out Distractions: Resolve to put aside the newspaper and stop "half listening" to a radio or TV program when someone is trying to talk to you.

4. Accept Controversy: When someone brings up a controversial subject, don't automatically go "deaf." Check your all-too-natural tendency to stop listening while thinking up devastating remarks to deliver in the next silence.

5. Repeat Instructions: Practice repeating instructions and directions correctly. Unless you can do so, you obviously will not be able to carry them out properly.

6. Help Others Listen: We encourage bad listening habits in our children by repeating our demands several times before getting obedience. Insofar as possible, we should give them a command once, and after that, impose some penalty so they will learn to listen the first time. We might set a good example by listening to them in the first place.