

Who is Listening? Skills of True Listeners

<u>Unskilled Listeners</u>	%	<u>Skilled Listeners</u>
	Skilled	
Tune out the other person at the beginning of communication. They "overstand" or prejudge what is being said without becoming informed.	_____	Tune in to the other person at the beginning of communication. They understand or defer their judgement. They listen for feelings and facts.
Are quick to mentally criticize grammar, appearance, or speaking style. Their attention is directed to external factors.	_____	Pay attention to the content of the words and behavior.
Spend the time getting ready to talk before the speaker is finished talking.	_____	Listen to all the words and nuances before formulating a response.
Tend to listen to mainly for facts (specific bits of information, possible errors, etc.) to pounce on the speaker to prove the speaker wrong.	_____	Listen to the main idea of the speaker and assemble a full thoughtfulness before responding to what the speaker is conveying.
Try to rebut every fact, especially exaggerations and errors.	_____	Concentrate on the main message. They attempt to respond to the whole thought. Keep the communication on track with the issue.
Fake or pretend they are attentive. Divide their attention or try to do something else while appearing to listen.	_____	Work to maintain attention on what the speaker is saying. Block out competing thoughts.
Give up when they realize they have to actively work at understanding what the speaker is saying.	_____	Listen fully, then sort, give feedback, and ask for clarification.
Tend to get distracted by emotional words. Don't control their own emotions and may express their emotions inappropriately.	_____	Feel honest emotions that are consistent with what the speaker is attempting to communicate. They do not allow their emotions to govern their behavior.
Give little, if any, appropriate, verbal response.	_____	Give affirmative and affirming statements. Invite additional comments.
Are unaware of the talking/listening rate variations and thereby waste mental energy being lost on tangential thinking.	_____	Match the pace of the speaker and work to stay on the same line of thought as the speaker.
Are impatient with the speaker and want to get back into the speaking part of the conversation quickly.	_____	Maintain patience and then proceed with their own thoughts at the appropriate time.

Listening improvement exercise: Rate how well you do the skilled behavior on a regular basis in all relationships and write that number as a percentage in the middle column. Work to improve your listening skills in each of the 11 couplets on a daily basis. Work with items that are close to 50% the first two days and then go to the lowest rating and work your way up daily. When you have all ratings at 70%, you will be a competent listener.