

Attention is a gift we chose to give

Everyone's time is limited. We have to be intentional about who we listen to, what we're listening for and when our most important moments to listen are.



Ideas for action



1. Tap into the power of silence

We often fear that silence during a conversation means that we've lost connection. However, a brief pause can help gather thoughts, understanding and enhance listening.



Pause for 3 seconds before giving your take in a conversation



2. Take an explorative approach to conversations

Rather than an assumptive approach that confirms what you're already thinking, go off-script and explore what the other person has said.



Practice curious questions in conversations e.g. How do you feel about xxx? What would you do differently now?



3. Carry out a listening post-mortem

These 2 questions can help you to reflect on, learn and improve your listening. Keep them in mind in your conversations:



What did I learn about the person I'm speaking with?



How did the person feel about what we were talking about?

Fundamentals for good listening

Listening is a two-way process and occurs when there are 4 key factors in place:

Quality: The discussion feels truthful. We stop listening when a discussion feels disingenuous.

Quantity: There is enough new knowledge but we don't feel overwhelmed by information.

Relation: The conversation has a natural flow and feels relevant.

Manner: The conversation style is appropriate for the relationship between the parties.

(credit from philosopher [Paul Grice](#))

Team listening skills - an exercise in improvisation to help you improve

One person starts a story with a sentence

They point at someone else to continue the story

This continues until either everyone has a go/or a set time ends.

The story must end with a conclusion.

Coach yourself questions

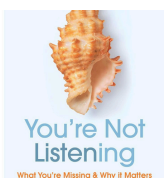
When could you most improve your listening at work?



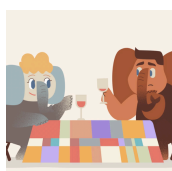
Reflect on a recent conversation. What did you learn about the person and how did they felt?



Recommended resources



You're Not Listening
by journalist
Kate Murphy



4 things all great listeners know
Ted-Ed video about what can we do to become better listeners



How to be a brilliant listener
Squiggly Careers podcast episode #134