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LISTENING, What is in it For Me

The most inconsiderate person in the world is the one who is talking when I want to talk. Everyone wants to talk, but no one wants to listen. Some people believe that if I want somebody to hear what I am saying, all I have to do is talk louder than the other person! The result is that people end up talking over each other, each raising their voices a little higher, until both are yelling.

You might be surprised about all the benefits you will receive if you become a good listener. One of the surprising benefits is that people will become more receptive to what you have to say. For more surprises read the seven benefits of listening listed below.

1. Listening Reduces Anxiety and Restores Logic.

Have you ever tried to be logical with someone who is very angry? Lots of luck. It doesn't matter whether it is anger, fear or someone contemplating suicide, listening reduces the emotion and helps to restore logic.

When your feelings go up, your logic goes down. A person suffering from a major anxiety attack can be restored to emotional balance by having someone do concentrated listening and paraphrasing back what they are saying for thirty minutes.

If someone is sitting on the edge of a building getting ready to jump, the *rule is to keep them talking*. The best way to do this is to paraphrase, paraphrase, paraphrase.

Paraphrasing is the way you let the other person know that you are hearing what they are saying the way they meant it. Since words have no meanings (you never find the meaning of a word in a dictionary; dictionaries contained the definitions of words) therefore paraphrasing allows you to picture and describe back to the person what you hear them saying.

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will take place, reduce in intensity
and are then free to change.**

2. Listening Shortens Angry Discussions.

What usually happens when someone is angry is that the other person feels attacked and gets angry back. One person uses putdowns and threats and the other person comes back with more putdowns and threats. It is like putting out a fire with gasoline.

In listening, you are reflecting back what you are hearing plus the inferences that you are picking up on from the person speaking. You are not resisting, defending or giving answers. The result is that you allow the **Verbal Rule** to work: *Feelings expressed verbally, as intensely as they are felt, will take place, reduce in intensity and are then free to change.*

The Verbal Rule is also known as the 15-minute rule. For over 25 years I had a Huge Group therapy. People would express their anger as strongly as they could, and it has **never** lasted over 15 minutes. It is very hard to stay angry with someone who is really listening to what you are saying and is accepting of your feelings.

3. Lengthens *and* Deepens Regular Communications.

Listening allows the talker to feel safe and, as a result, to be more reflective, introspective and share on a deeper level about issues that are important to them. You will often find that it is more important to be listened to than to get your way!

4. Listening Clarifies for Both.

Listening allows the you to hear what the talker is really saying. And, then by paraphrasing back, being it helps to clarify meanings and inferences to make sure you are hearing the message the way that the talker meant it. Also, listening and paraphrasing back what you are hearing clarifies it for the talker. Don't be surprised if you are listening

and the other person says, “Yea, that is what I said, but that is not what I meant. What I meant was . . .”



5. Listening Demonstrates Interest, Caring *and* Love.

Research states that the single most important behavior a person can do to communicate love is to listen to their mate. Of course, this applies to children as much as it does to adults. Bosses who listen to their employees consistently get the highest approval scores and have employees who work the hardest.

6. Listening Imparts a Sense of Self-Worth.

Everyone wants their child to have a good self-image. It goes clear back to “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Reading to a child lets them know that they are important. Listening is an even more powerful message to the child that what they think, and feel are important and that they are valuable enough to have someone listen to them.

7. Listening Makes Others More Willing to Listen.

All of us want to be listened to. As a parent, we all think that what we have to say is important and worth listening to because we have more experience (and have made more mistakes). If you want to be listened to, first be the listener.

If you are doing a good job of listening, there will come a time when the person talking will start to slow down, stop, and then may ask, “What do

you think?” Now is your time to share your ideas. But, do not be surprised if the person starts to argue or interrupt. All that says is that you need to go back to listening again!

Most of us are not used to having people really listen to what we are saying. And it may, at first, be an uncomfortable feeling having someone inside your head that is really understanding you.

Practice listening. The more you do, the better you will be at it. And, the more rewarded you will feel.

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