Effective Listening

Introduction

Effective listening is often the one skill that is overlooked during the communication process. In order to be an effective listener, you must quiet your own thoughts and listen with genuine interest and without preconceived ideas or judgment. Of all human skills, listening is perhaps the most difficult. There is a reason we have two ears and only one mouth.

Instructions

Take a minute and think of someone you know who is a very good listener. Write down in point form why you think that person is a good listener. Conversely, think of someone or a situation in which you felt you were not heard. What happened during that conversation? What are the characteristics of someone who does not listen? Jot down your ideas.

You can post a summary of your answer in the forum provided below so that other students in the program can learn from your thoughts, or you can simply reflect on your own responses.

A sample answer follows:

Good listeners:

* + - Don’t interrupt
    - Make good eye contact
    - Acknowledge they are listening by nodding their head and by open postures and expressions
    - Reflect the manner that you are feeling and conveying and behave appropriately; they show empathy
    - Paraphrase or summarize what you are trying to say
    - Ask open and closed questions that clearly indicate they are listening and to clarify
    - Don’t judge

Bad listeners:

* + - Appear distracted
    - Change topics
    - Interrupt
    - Keep checking their cellphone for messages
    - Aren’t empathetic
    - Ask questions that aren’t relevant
    - Have closed body language
    - Keep looking around