

RECOVERY TOPICS GROUP - LISTENING SKILLS

HOW DO YOU LISTEN?

Exceptional listening skills can be the difference between a good interaction and great one. Genuine listening builds trust, credibility and respect. When you fully listen instead of trying to compose a reply in your head, the result is a better interaction! What you say when you do respond is proof of how well you listen.



Can you expect others to listen to you if you're not willing to FULLY listen to them?

7 TYPES OF LISTENERS

THE "PREOCCUPIEDS": Pre-occupied listeners come across as rushed and constantly looking around or doing something else. Also known as multi-taskers, they cannot sit still and listen.

Tips: If you are a "Preoccupied" listener, make a point to set aside what you are doing when someone is speaking to you.

If you are speaking to a "Preoccupied" listener, you might ask, "Is this a good time?" or say, "I need your undivided attention for just a moment." Begin with a statement that will get their attention, be brief, and get to the bottom line quickly because their attention span is short.

THE "OUT-TO-LUNCHERS": These people are physically there for you, but mentally not engaged. You can tell this by the blank look on their faces. They tend to daydream or think about something else.

Tips: If you are an "Out-to-Luncher", act like a good listener. Be alert, maintain eye contact, lean forward and show interest by asking questions.

If you are speaking to an "Out-to-Luncher," check in with them every now and again and ask if they understood what you were saying. As with the "Pre-occupieds," begin with a statement that will catch their attention and be concise and to the point, because their attention span is also short.

The "interrupters": These people are ready to chime in at any given time. They are perched and ready for a break to complete your sentence for you. They are not listening to you because they are focused on trying to guess what you will say and what they want to say.

Tips: If you are an "Interrupter," make a point to apologize every time you catch yourself interrupting. This will make you more conscious of it.

If you are speaking to an "Interrupter," when they chime in, stop immediately and let them talk, or they will never listen to you. When they are done, you might say, "As I was saying before..." to bring their interruption to their attention.

THE "WHATEVERS": These people remain aloof and show little emotion when listening. They do not seem to care about anything you have to say.

Tips: If you are a “Whatever,” concentrate on the full message, not just the verbal message. Make a point to listen with your eyes, ears, and heart. Pay attention to body language and try to understand why this person wants to talk to you about this issue.

If you are speaking to a “Whatever,” dramatize your ideas and ask your listener questions to maintain their involvement.

THE “COMBATIVES”: These people are armed and ready for war. They enjoy disagreeing and blaming others.

Tips: If you are a “Combative,” make an effort to put yourself in the speaker’s shoes and understand, accept and find merit in another’s point of view.

If you are speaking to a “Combative,” when he or she disagrees or points the blame, look forward instead of back. Talk about how you might agree to disagree or about what can be done differently next time.

THE “ANALYSTS”: These people are constantly in the role of counselor or therapist, and they are ready to provide you with unsolicited answers. They think they are great listeners and love to help. They are constantly in an analyze-what-you-are-saying-and-fix-it mode.

Tips: If you are an “Analyst,” relax and understand that not everyone is looking for an answer, solution or advice. Some people just like bouncing ideas off other people because it helps them see the answers more clearly themselves.

If you are speaking to an “Analyst,” you might begin by saying, “I just need to run something by you. I’m not looking for any advice.”

THE “ENGAGERS”: These are the consciously aware listeners. They listen with their eyes, ears, and hearts and try to put themselves in the speaker’s shoes. This is listening at the highest level. Their listening skills encourage you to continue talking and give you the opportunity to discover your own solutions and let your ideas unfold.

Tips: If you are an “Engager,” keep it up. People truly appreciate this about you and will likely try to follow your example.

If you are speaking to an “Engager,” take the time to acknowledge their attentiveness. Thank them for their interest in you and your topic.

