

# The What, Why, and How of Effective Listening

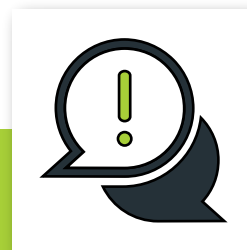
- All great communication begins with listening. Whether you are communicating with your colleagues or clients, listening always trumps telling.
- There are three levels of listening. With deliberate and effortful practice, one can progress from level 1 to level 3:



## Level 1

### Listening to Respond

- ✓ Most of us operate at this level.
- ✓ You are listening with a focus on yourself.
- ✓ As you listen, you are thinking about what to say next, or you are preparing your next question even while the other person is speaking.
- ✓ You often interrupt the speaker.



## Level 2

### Listening to Understand

- ✓ You are listening with a focus on gaining information.
- ✓ The focus is shifted from you, to the task/project/issue at hand.
- ✓ Emotions are minimized and information exchange is maximized.



## Level 3

### Empathetic Listening

- ✓ This is the most advanced level of listening.
- ✓ You are listening to both, emotions and information.
- ✓ The focus is shifted completely to the other person.
- ✓ You understand the other person's emotions and feelings.
- ✓ You remain non-judgmental.

- Here are a few behaviors that can be followed to master the art of effective listening:

- ✓ Clarify the goal of the conversation
- ✓ Listen without interrupting
- ✓ Probe to gain additional insights and encourage more conversation
- ✓ Clarify your understanding and paraphrase
- ✓ Be non-judgmental, even if you do not agree
- ✓ Pay attention to nonverbal cues
- ✓ Create a safe space
- ✓ Establish if the person wants you to just listen, or is also seeking your help