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# **Chapter 6 Assignment**

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* *How can you improve your listening in classroom or work situations to improve your overall performance?*

If I had to single out one thing that has cost me in my job performance over the last 10 years of working in sales, I would say that it has been the times that I have failed to listen. There have been times in my career I have found myself either getting impatient, assuming a client’s verbal messages meaning, or simply rambling on about something irrelevant. These instances have often led to ineffective conversation that not only failed to result in sales, but also hurt the buyer-client relationship that I pride myself in valuing so much.

One thing that I can improve in terms of listening is mitigate premature judgement when potential customers are speaking. This is something that I have struggled with for years and tends to be a problem during times that I am struggling to meet quotas. Putting aside the “chicken or the egg” debate that can accompany the topic of whether a lack of sales makes me impatient, or the other way around, the fact is: when I am not closing sales, I tend to find myself rehearsing responses to objections that my customers have not even had a chance to say. Although my assumptions are often correct as a side-effect of having the same conversations with hundreds of people, just as frequently those assumptions lead to quick responses that make me seem as though I did not give their concerns any thought. By doing a better job of not prematurely judging their message I can send the message that I *do* care about what they are saying and that their concerns are valid and ultimately lead to my responses to those concerns having more of an impact. This will lead to an overall better customer experience, less of their concerns going without address, and improvement in terms of my sales production.

**307 Words**

* *How can you improve your listening behaviors with a significant other? A parent? A child? A friend? Someone you dislike but need to communicate with? (Discuss at least two of those relationships.)*

There are a couple of ways that I can improve my interpersonal relationships through listening better. The first person I think of is a friend of mine, Diana. Diana and I have worked together for a couple of years now and I considered her a friend for the majority of that time. One thing that I know has hurt our friendship, though, is that I am often distracted by my phone when she is talking to me. This bad habit has often made her feel as though I do not care what she is saying, and I suspect it also makes her feel as though I do not respect her. This would not be such a concern to me if those things were true, but they are not. Often when this occurs, Diana will begin a conversation while I am on my phone, either reading for school or planning my day. Rather than continuing to do those things while she talks to me, I should put my phone away until the conversation is done or let her know that I am busy. This will prevent the wrong message – that I am ignoring her – from being and help her know that I care about what she is saying, or that I am too busy for small talk at that time.

Another relationship that could benefit from me listening better is the one that I share with my fiancé. Between work, my side-work, and now school her and I have had less one-on-one time, something that we have never had an abundance of as it was. Unfortunately, rather than listening better to improve the quality of conversations we share in this limited time, I have regularly focused on my added responsibilities, and how I am going to manage them instead. This example of a mental distraction has caused her and I to sometimes go several days without good conversation, and ironically made my tasks harder to accomplish because I am stressed about not having quality time with her while working on them.

**340 Words**

* *Identify situations in which you listen well and situations in which you can improve. What can you do to improve the latter?*

Likely due to an underlying fear of falling victim to the Dunning Kruger effect – the cognitive bias in which people wrongly overestimate their knowledge in a specific area – I find that I listen well when somebody tells me I am wrong about something. Being able to maintain appropriate focus in these situations has been vital to my growth as a person, and often times has turned what could have been heated disagreements into very constructive debate.

I do not, however, listen very well when people are complaining about their personal problems. I attribute this to the fact that when I have problems, I tend to either keep them to myself or talk to others lightheartedly about them; often by turning my problems into a joke and laughing them off. So, when others complain to me about their problems, I tend to be more annoyed than empathetic. This is not to say that people should not talk about their problems to me, or that my annoyance is justified. I understand that most of the time when this is happening, the person complaining’s intention is usually in search of emotional relief from whatever it is they are complaining about. Now, after reading chapter 6, I believe the reason that I get annoyed in these situations is that I usually respond to complaints with solutions that would fix whatever it is that the complaint is about. This leads me to get annoyed when my advice is not welcomed. I think that the best way to listen to others’ personal problems is to actively listen, and to ask the questions that will enable to them to come up with their own solution. By doing this, I will benefit because I will not feel as though I did not listen well enough, and they will benefit from being heard. Occasionally, this may even help them to come up with an even better, more relevant solution than the one I could offer.

**326 Words**

* *Think of specific examples of desirable listening behaviors and show how these exemplify concepts in this chapter.*

Some examples of desirable listening behaviors are things such as setting your phone face-down during a one-on-one meeting, repeating instructions back to somebody that asks for your help or nodding in agreement when being criticized.

Setting your phone down face-down in a one-on-one meeting exemplifies a couple of the concepts from the chapter. It eliminates your phone as a distraction, allowing you to begin listening effectively, and receive the messages that the other person is sending in full capacity. It also sends a non-verbal cue that says that the other person has your full attention.

Another example is repeating instructions back to somebody. By repeating what a person has asked you to do back to them, you can show them that their message has been received, and that you understand exactly what it is that they are asking you to do, achieving the true goal of the listening process – to reach a common understanding.

**154 Words**

**TOTAL: 1127 Words**