

Do You Hear What I Hear?

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COM125: Interpersonal Communication

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Abstract

Overview

Some people believe that you either know how to listen, or you don't.

However, like most skills, listening can be learned. In order to do so, you need to better understand what listening is and how it works. Sometimes we aren't listening because we are busy talking and disclosing things about ourselves that should perhaps remain private.

Because listening is a multifaceted skill, there are many different kinds of listening and ways to listen. In this assignment, you will study the different types of listening and analyze what you observed in the Erin Brokovich movie clip titled, "The Bonus Check" which appears immediately below the topic titled, "Skills of Effective Listening". View the other videos as well.

You should spend approximately 6.5 hours on this assignment.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

What Is “Listening” and Why is it Important?

The Types of Listening

Discriminative Listening Discriminative Listening occurs at the beginning receiving stages of hearing new auditory stimuli and is a more focus-intensive form of listening to our surroundings (*Communication in the Real World*, 2013, pp. 333).

- *example*: After hearing a noise down the street come out of some alley we will focus our listening on that alley to ensure that the sound was not a sign of a struggle occurring, or an unknown danger about to occur.

Informational Listening Informational listening is when the listener is taking in the information with the intentions of comprehension and retention (*Communication in the Real World*, 2013, pp. 334).

- *example*: Class lectures, tutorial videos

Critical Listening Critical listening involves the listener hearing the information being given to them with the goal of afterwards analysing and evaluating said information (*Communication in the Real World*, 2013, pp. 334–335). This typically involves the listener providing some sort of evaluation or judgement after the conversation (agreeing, disagreeing, etc).

- *example*: Debate mediation, crisis counseling.

Empathetic Listening Empathetic listening is, in my opinion, the most important form of listening available. It involves us attempting to put ourselves into or at least feel the same emotions or pain that others are feeling (*Communication in the Real World*, 2013, pp. 335–336).

- *example*: Therapy, friends talking about problems, crisis counseling, grief counseling.

Self Disclosure

Self Disclosure is when someone intentionally reveals their own private personal information. This can be positive or negative in connotation. For example, if someone is wearing a lapel pin which shows their political affiliation, this discloses that information about their political views to the public.

Listening's Role in Understanding

Listening, as we have already said previously, plays an incredibly important role in understanding (i.e. the *most* important role). Listening is key to communication in any sort of relationship as it helps to form the bond between the speaker and the listener. People, and really *any living being on this planet*, simply want to feel as though they are heard and understood when they speak to others. This also goes hand-in-hand with the skill of empathy. Empathy is, in my opinion, **the** most important trait that anyone can hold when communicating with others.

Outside of our personal and business-related relationships, listening still plays an all-important role in our daily lives. As children all the way through our education we have to know to listen effectively to our teachers, guidance counselors, and professors. Anyone who has sat through a guest lecture or had a teacher with a less-than-enthusiastic way of speaking knows how difficult it is to listen to any topic that we do not personally care about and actually retain that information, which is why listening skills are important to develop as they can help someone overcome an obstacle they may be facing by “bouncing ideas off” of their peers, which leads to a much better overall understanding of a topic by everyone involved (Caspersz & Stasinska, [n.d.](#), pp. 5).

It is a known issue in the academic community that listening is an *incredibly* important skill for anyone to have a good grasp of. Unfortunately, this is not how schools tend to be teaching curriculum and much more focus is spent on the acts of speaking, reading, and writing (Bodie, [2012](#), pp. 3). To make the situation worse, when listening *is* taught in our education it is focused almost entirely on a classroom environment setting, forcing anyone in the class to believe that listening is simply just for quick and efficient information processing

(i.e. during lectures or class presentations) (Bostrom, [2011](#)).

The Most Important Type of Listening

The most important type of listening would have to be *empathetic listening*. I believe this is important because empathy is, personally, what I like to look for depending on the type of problem I am coming to someone with. Empathy allows us to feel like we are not alone in our pain or happiness, and sharing the same emotion during a conversation as the speaker shows a deeper form of understanding than simply regurgitating the information.

Analysis of Erin's Listening in the Exploration Scene

I personally do not think that Erin's listening was the only problem that caused the misunderstanding we had witnessed, and I also do not believe that the misunderstanding was entirely due to a difference in the gender of the two individuals having the conversation. Erin listened *just fine* in my opinion, as it is her boss who had mislead her by using somber tones and body language so as to suggest exactly what she had expected. Thus, Erin should really *not* be embarrassed by the encounter because clearly it was her boss who was just trying to “poke-fun” at her. Her boss also clearly knew that is exactly how she was going to react, judging by his expression when Erin reacted the way she did (Soderbergh, [2000](#)).

Self-Disclosure's Role in Erin's Listening Methods

In the film, self-disclosure played a huge role in Erin's conflict with her boss. Because she had thought that she was not being appreciated for all of her hard work she “lashed-out” (which I believe to be an opinion but for the purposes of this paper we will continue). Self-disclosure is in all likelihood what got her the larger salary in the first place — many of those in media, business, and journalism tend to admire the individuals who “stand out” and hold the confidence required to make it in these competitive industries. (Soderbergh, [2000](#)).

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