

# Becoming a Better Listener

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## THE WHAT AND WHY OF LISTENING



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# Overview



Why a course on listening?

Optimizing your listening now

Objectives of listening

Poor listening

Effective listening



# Why a Course on Listening?

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# Why a Course on Listening?

**The biggest communication  
problem is we don't listen  
to understand**

**We listen to reply**



# “I Already Know How to Listen”



**Listening is key to our career success**

**IT professionals don't have the best reputation when it comes to communication**

**Listening is a significant part of communication**

**Poor listening is a well-documented problem**



# “I Already Know How to Listen”



Listening is a skill, and...

Skills can be improved

When you improve your listening skills, you can help others listen to (not just hear) you better

Listening is not hearing... listening is understanding, connecting, educating, even "communicating"



# Optimize Your Listening Now

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# For Any Pluralsight Course

Are you listening to this course in the background?

Are you listening just for things to jump out at you?

Are you multitasking?

Try any of these specific tactics now (and do it for the next few courses you watch) and see if your comprehension and retention increase





# For Any Pluralsight Course



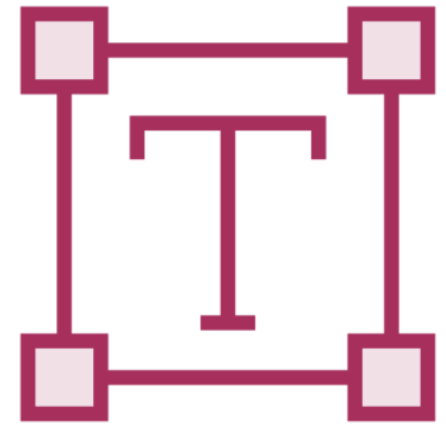
Turn off everything  
else (email, browser,  
spreadsheet,  
code, etc.)



Take notes  
(paper/pencil,  
notepad, etc.)



Write down things  
learned +  
emotions/reactions



Summarize each  
clip, or module, in  
your own words  
(example: “Vern’s  
Method” for  
reading books)



# For Any Pluralsight Course



**Comment on your emotions/reactions**

**Write whether you agree or not, and what alternatives you think of to proposed ideas**

**List your follow-up action items**

**Example: “Dave’s Simple Method” of note-taking and follow-up**



# For Any Pluralsight Course

**Actually follow-up  
in the comments, or  
by email**

(this gets you  
actively engaged in  
“the discussion”)

**Put a measurable  
time on how long  
you will try  
a suggestion**

**“I will close my  
email every time I  
listen to Pluralsight  
courses for the next  
two months”**



# For Any Pluralsight Course



**Describe what you learned to someone else**

**Write down your objectives**

- What do you hope to learn?
- What do you hope to resolve?

**The Goal: Deeper Understanding/Retention**



# Objectives of Listening

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# We Listen to...



Gain greater understanding

Relay compassion (*“I care and am interested in you”*)

Read between the lines and get the real message (including: body language, and what isn't said)

Know what is expected of you and your team

Know how to be successful on a project or in a situation



# When We Do This, We Can...

Be more effective in  
our job

Becoming better  
means we might  
become more  
important

Becoming better  
means we might  
become more wanted

Becoming better  
means we might  
become more valued

Becoming better  
means we might  
become more  
effective

All of this should  
mean we can have  
more security and  
more fun in our career



# Not Necessarily to...



Be heard



Focus on being heard  
and you might seem  
like a selfish jerk who  
doesn't care about  
anything else



Listening is the  
“input” part of the  
communication  
equation



# Poor Listening

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# Might Be Construed as...



**Misunderstanding**

**Poor comprehension**

**Disinterest or apathy**

**Inability to understand (you are not sophisticated enough)**

**Immaturity (sign you are not ready for the position you have)**

**An embarrassment (don't interface with the customer!)**

# Can You Think of Examples?

Politics  
(presidential  
debates)

Business (sales,  
negotiations,  
projects)

Family (parenting  
and relationships)

Neighborhood/  
Friends (feuds)

Tom Cruise and the  
Oprah Interview  
“loses his mind”

You?



# Effective Listening

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# Might Be Construed as...



## **Someone who gets it, and:**

- Understands better than they do
- Will add value to the problem/situation
- Cares about what's going on
- Validates person's position/recommendation/feelings
- Is an integral part of the team

**Someone we will put in front of the customer**

# Can You Think of Examples?

Politics  
(presidential  
debates)

Business (sales,  
negotiations,  
projects)

Family (parenting  
and relationships)

Neighborhood/  
Friends  
(partnerships)

Matt Damon and  
condescending  
reporter

You?



# Summary



## The “what” and “why” of listening

- Why “listening?”
- Skills for Pluralsight courses
- Objectives of listening
- Thoughts on poor listening
- Thoughts on effective listening

Next up:  
Improve your active  
listening skills

