**What is mindful listening?** How is it different from normal listening?

Have you ever stopped and realized in a group conversation, meeting, or even just a talk with a friend that you really don't even know what you're talking about?

If you're like most people, this happens quite frequently. While you may be interested in the topic at hand, your mind will still drift off to thinking about something else that is going on in your life.

Our brains are scattered and our minds are unruly, which is why practicing mindful listening can be a crucial part of a meaningful and attentive conversation.

You have to be in the present moment to absorb what is being said. You also have to listen without judgment, and without trying to formulate what you are going to say in response.

**What Is Mindful Listening?**

[Mindfulness](https://www.amazon.com/10-Minute-Mindfulness-Habits-Living-Present-ebook/dp/B071HVMVVR/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=dghblogmindfulness-20&linkId=f15199e4b3945d2a0317e83963498484" \t "_blank) is the practice of paying purposeful attention to the present moment, without making any judgments. It encourages one to be aware of the present and [let go of worries or anxieties](https://www.amazon.com/Declutter-Your-Mind-Eliminate-Mindfulness-ebook/dp/B01KU04K5A/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=dghblogmindfulness-20&linkId=053b145838705281cc05aa52e8e496dd), along with any physical or emotional reactions you may have to outside influences.

Listening in this way requires you to give your full focus to the person who is talking, and to use your senses to understand their words and emotions. You must do this while being open-minded, and show that you are taking interest in what the other person is saying. Without being mindful, you may become distracted and fail to hear what someone else is doing or saying.

Studies have suggested that the average person only remembers 25% of what someone has told them only a few minutes prior to being asked. The goal of mindful listening is to stop your running thoughts so you can hear the message that is being shared with you, and so the speaker can feel understood. It is important to allow yourself to have the time to absorb everything the other person is saying.

**Benefits of Mindful Listening**

According to American author David Augsburger, *“Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.”*

**Personal Benefits of Mindful Listening**

**1. Mindful listening helps increase your empathy.**

Empathy refers to the ability to understand another person and share what they are feeling. When you are practicing mindful listening, you will increase your empathy because you will be taking the time and energy to put yourself in someone else's position, and really listen to what they are saying and their motivations behind engaging in the conversation with you.

**2. Mindful listening further develops self-awareness.**

Mindful listening will allow you to be conscious of your physical and mental presence throughout the conversation. It may also help you uncover some unknown biases that you have when listening to someone else's perspective or point of view. [Self-awareness](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/what-is-self-awareness/) is a critical part of being mindful because it allows you to always be in the present moment.

**3. Mindful listening helps deepen relationships.**

Part of [being mindful](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/mindfulness-exercises/) is being able to know yourself well enough to be able to create deep relationships with other people. If you are able to give someone your full attention by listening in a mindful way, you will be able to get to know them on a level that you otherwise would miss. The more you are able to understand someone, and vice versa, the deeper your relationship will be.

**4. Mindful listening improves your focus and attention.**

Practicing your [focus](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/build-power-focus/) while you are in a conversation will spill over to other aspects of your life. You will be able to gradually learn how to quiet your busy mind and pay attention only to what is being said to you.

**Professional Rewards of Mindful Listening**

**1. Mindful listening**[**improves your communication**](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/interpersonal-communication-skills/)**with colleagues, encouraging collaboration and initiative.**

As a mindful listener, you will be able to improve your work with your colleagues. With proper communication, you and your colleagues will be able to listen to each other to learn about each other's ideas and thoughts about possible projects. Working together as a conducive team will allow you to better your work.

**2. Mindful listening helps you make stronger connections.**

With mindful listening, you are able to connect to the person to whom you are talking by taking the time to fully understand what they are saying and why they are sharing it with you. This will help to build a stronger connection because you can relate to what they are saying.

**3. Mindful listening increases productivity because people are actually listening.**

When people take the time to listen, they will also be able to engage in the conversation and add in their own thoughts to build off what the other person is saying. This can help people stay productive because it leaves little time to get off track or to put off short-term goals.

**4. Mindful listening boosts workplace morale because employees feel they are appreciated and listened to.**

When people feel like they are being listened to, they feel as if they are a part of the group. This is important in feeling valued as an employee. Also, employees who feel heard in their company are more likely to remain loyal employees than those who feel as if their opinions do not matter.

**5. Mindful listening improves observational skills, allowing leaders to choose the best persons for projects or to delegate tasks to.**