

## Active Listening: 4 Elements to Boost Your Business!

### EARS: BUSINESS PRACTICES

Remember, 80% of our communication is non-verbal! If you are only “listening with your ears” you risk misinterpreting 80% of what someone is trying to say. Here are some ideas to help you combat the most common listening mistake:

First, If you are go to attend long meetings, conferences, or workshops **look at the agenda for where the breaks are located**. Since active listening has a physical effect on people it's ok to need a break, in order to be at your best listening performance. If you do not see any pre-scheduled breaks **ask the leader** ahead of time. If you do this tactfully the meeting facilitator will appreciate your willingness to ensure the best experience for the entire group.

Something else to consider, **look for the pitfalls** and “usual suspects” that often cause you to listen with only your ears. Maybe not getting enough **sleep** makes it hard for you to stay fully engaged. Or, maybe you recognized every afternoon **tiredness or fatigue** sets in and makes it harder for you to tune in to the people that are talking to you. Or maybe **distractions** pull your attention and cause you to only hear instead of listen. Whatever they may be, **identify the culprits that make active listening harder for you**, and set up guardrails to protect against it.

Lastly, consider this tip which really helped transform my relational equity in the workplace. When someone is done talking **ask them if you can summarize (in your own words) what they just said**. It's really easy to hear what someone **said** but miss what they **meant**... summarizing it back to the person shows that you listened, and more importantly, that you care enough to make sure you get it right.

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