

# 5 Ways To...Improve Your Listening Skills



Listening is every bit as important as speaking. People who give others the opportunity to be heard and understood earn their trust and loyalty.

## Five Tips to Help You Improve Your Listening Skills

### 1. **Be in the moment, stay in the moment.**

Have you ever found yourself speaking to someone and noticed that they seem distracted by something and aren't really listening to you? You probably thought it was annoying, frustrating, and disrespectful.

When someone is speaking to you, it's important to be fully in the moment with them. If something else is on your mind, like a call you have to make, or an email you need to answer, complete the task and when you're finished let them know you are ready to listen.

When listening, pay close attention not only to their words but to their tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. These non-verbal clues can be as important as the words themselves.

## **2. Put yourself in their shoes.**

Keep in mind that whatever the speaker is discussing is important to them. When they're speaking, think about where they're coming from and why. People will always appreciate that you made the effort to really hear them.

## **3. Listen for key points and acknowledge them to the speaker.**

Many people have trouble focusing on what someone is saying, especially if they speak for longer than a few minutes. If you find yourself in this situation, try to retain a few key points from the conversation. Then, when they finish talking, paraphrase these key points and ask for clarification.

Even if you were unable to follow the entire conversation, they will appreciate that you made an honest effort to listen and understand.

## **4. It's all in the body language.**

Maintaining eye contact shows interest, understanding and focus. Maintaining an open posture (avoid crossing your arms or placing your hands on your hips) demonstrates that you are genuinely interested in what the speaker is saying.

## **5. Stay curious, keep an open mind and always be ready to learn.**

People who are naturally curious are always looking to discover something new and see conversations as learning opportunities. They are open to other people's perspectives and don't feel the need to always defend their own point of view.

Developing strong listening skills will enhance your credibility and improve your interpersonal relationships, both at work and at home.