

# Principles of Effective Listening

## 1. Stop talking.

Don't talk, just listen. Don't interrupt, talk over them, impose your solutions, or finish their sentences. Only ask questions for clarification and understanding.

## 2. Relax and focus on the speaker.

Put other things out of your mind and concentrate on the messages being communicated.

## 3. Put the speaker at ease.

Face them, maintain normal eye contact, smile, and nod or use other gestures to encourage them to continue.

## 4. Eliminate distractions.

Don't answer emails, doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, text, etc. Avoid interruptions.

## 5. Empathize.

Try to understand their point of view.

## 6. Be patient.

Let them continue at their own pace.

## 7. Keep an open mind.

Don't judge. Avoid personal prejudice and biases. Be impartial. Don't become distracted by a person's accent, speech pattern, habits, or mannerisms.

## 8. Listen for ideas, not just words.

Get the whole picture. Try to picture what the speaker is saying.

## 9. Listen for paralinguage:

tone, rate, pitch, volume, emphasis.

## 10. Watch non-verbal cues –

posture, stance, gestures, facial expressions, eye movement.