

LISTENING



Name

Overview

Listening is a program that provides you with the key information and skills that will assist you in communicating with others.

This program develops your listening skills through learning to recognize the emotional level of others, using listening acknowledgments to keep conversations alive, and using appropriate questions to maintain rapport.

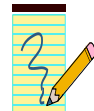
Listening is designed for you to actively participate with your peers in the training workshop. This training program encourages you to improve your knowledge and skills by integrating your work-related situations into the workshop.

Course Objectives

Our goal is to build greater personal skill and confidence in your ability to listen and communicate by focusing on the areas listed below.

- *Identifying Your Listening and Communication Style*
- *Recognizing the Emotional Level of Others*
- *Using Emotional Indicators to Determine Questions and Statements*
- *Identifying and Using Positive and Negative Listening Responses*
- *Using Common Listening Acknowledgments to Gain Rapport*
- *Developing Open-Ended and Clarifying Questions*
- *Using Questions to Uncover Facts and Feelings*

Personal Objectives



In this section of your workbook, write out one or two personal objectives you would like to accomplish by the end of Listening. Use these objectives as your measuring tools to help you determine where to focus your energies during the workshop. Try to limit your initial objective to about 10 to 15 words and maybe one or two bullets. As you get into the exercises and talk to other participants, you can modify your objectives.

Your Listening and Communication Style



Outlined below and on the following page is a simple questionnaire that will give you a snapshot look at your listening and communication tendencies. There are no “right” or “wrong” choices. Just try to answer the questions as best you can. When you are finished with question number 10, read how to score your answers.

Under each statement are 4 possible phrases to complete the statement. Put a number “4” next to the statement that is most like you. Put a number “1” next to the phrase that is least like you. Put a number “3” next to the phrase that is your second choice, and a number “2” next to the phrase that is your third choice. All the phrases should have a number next to it. However, for each statement, there should not be any duplicate numbers. For example, 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D, must all have different numbers, ranging from 1 to 4.

1. When I communicate with others, I try to . . .

- A. _____ organize facts and figures.
- B. _____ stress the values and goals we have in common.
- C. _____ prioritize things to be done immediately and require prompt action.
- D. _____ help them to see the overall picture and ideas.

2. When I am ready to make a decision, I communicate . . .

- A. _____ the immediate results of my efforts.
- B. _____ the impact it will have on other people and how they will view it.
- C. _____ how creative and different my decision is.
- D. _____ the possible alternatives and whether I have enough supporting information.

3. I feel satisfied when . . .

- A. _____ I have helped someone by understanding his or her feelings.
- B. _____ I have accomplished more than I have targeted.
- C. _____ I come up with a different idea or suggestion.
- D. _____ I systematically solve a tough problem through careful thought.

4. People who know me say I communicate mostly . . .

- A. _____ in a creative, thought-provoking manner.
- B. _____ in a focused, strong-willed way.
- C. _____ carefully, logically, and analytically.
- D. _____ in a caring and empathetic style.

Your Listening and Communication Style - Continued**5. I have a hard time listening to people who . . .**

- A. _____ can't make a decision or avoid doing so.
- B. _____ are too impulsive and don't think things through.
- C. _____ appear apathetic and unconcerned about other people.
- D. _____ are afraid to try something new or different.

6. Whenever I am trying to influence others, I . . .

- A. _____ focus on the facts and why my ideas are the best way.
- B. _____ first attempt to understand the other person's needs and feelings.
- C. _____ try to express my creativity and how my suggestions work.
- D. _____ focus on the practical benefits of my ideas.

7. It is best to be . . .

- A. _____ a warm friendly person.
- B. _____ a person who gets things done, even if it means stepping on a few toes.
- C. _____ a creative person who looks at and understands the big picture.
- D. _____ a logical and careful person who considers all alternatives.

8. When people disagree with me, I . . .

- A. _____ determine ways to outsmart them.
- B. _____ listen for their feelings and stress the importance of our relationship.
- C. _____ relate examples of similar situations or ideas that worked.
- D. _____ stop the conversation and try to gather more facts and study the situation.

9. Whenever there is strong resistance to my ideas, I . . .

- A. _____ listen to recognize the prevailing emotion and determine their needs.
- B. _____ reconsider my approach and decide what needs to be changed.
- C. _____ immediately determine the major problems and work to solve them.
- D. _____ re-think the ideas and decide on alternatives to overcome any weaknesses.

10. When I am under stress, other people would describe me as being . . .

- A. _____ too forceful and impulsive.
- B. _____ too conservative and careful.
- C. _____ too emotional.
- D. _____ too distant and uncaring.

Your Listening and Communication Style - Continued

Listening and Communication Style Scoring Sheet

Transfer your scores from the 10 statements you just completed to the appropriate line below. Make sure you transfer the correct number. Once you have completed transferring all the numbers, add up your score under each of the four categories to get a total for each category.

<u>Logical</u>	<u>Empathetic</u>	<u>Creative</u>	<u>Assertive</u>
1A _____	1B _____	1D _____	1C _____
2D _____	2B _____	2C _____	2A _____
3D _____	3A _____	3C _____	3B _____
4C _____	4D _____	4A _____	4B _____
5B _____	5C _____	5D _____	5A _____
6A _____	6B _____	6C _____	6D _____
7D _____	7A _____	7C _____	7B _____
8D _____	8B _____	8C _____	8A _____
9D _____	9A _____	9B _____	9C _____
10B _____	10C _____	10D _____	10A _____
Total _____	_____	_____	_____

Look at your totals above. Your highest score will indicate your greatest tendency. Your lowest score will indicate the style least like you. You might have two or more categories that are close in their totals. This suggests that you may balance between those categories.

There is no right or correct category. To be a great listener, you must be able to listen and communicate in all four categories. Therefore, you need to learn to be flexible, and base your style on the style of the person you are communicating with or listening to. You will see in this workshop the importance of observing the prevailing emotion and adapting to what you see and hear. If the person is communicating in a style that is least like you, then you know that you will really have to focus your energies to build rapport with that person. Learn to be comfortable in all four categories, and you will naturally be perceived as a great listener.

Your Listening and Communication Style - Continued

Outlined below for each of the four categories are other words that can be used to describe the style. Also listed are some perceptions other styles have of that style. Keep this in mind as you listen and communicate with other styles.

Listening and Communication Style Overview

Logical

- Analytical
- Deliberate
- Structured
- Thorough

Potential Communication and Listening Problem Areas

- *Explains too much*
- *Asks too many questions*
- *Offers too many alternatives*
- *Presents ideas in a too structured way*

Creative

- Innovative
- Original
- Visionary
- Intuitive

Potential Communication and Listening Problem Area

- *Doesn't focus on facts or details*
- *Brings up too many ideas*
- *Talks too much*
- *Presents ideas in an abstract manner*

Empathetic

- Warm
- Understanding
- Sensitive
- Patient

Potential Communication and Listening Problem Areas

- *Doesn't present facts*
- *Focuses too much on personality*
- *Presents too many stories*
- *Doesn't get to the main point*

Assertive

- Decisive
- Direct
- Dynamic
- Energetic

Potential Communication and Listening Problem Areas

- *Doesn't ask enough questions*
- *Comes across as too strong*
- *Interrupts frequently*
- *Tries to move too quickly*

Recognizing Emotions



One of the first things a skilled listener and communicator does is learn to immediately recognize the in-the-moment emotional level of the person he or she is interacting with. This immediate recognition then helps determine the key skills to use. Different emotions require different tactics and responses.

Outlined below are several common positive and negative emotions that everyone experiences. As you look at the words, keep in mind there are hundreds of other words you could use instead of the ones listed. If you are more comfortable with changing the words, then go ahead and do that in the spaces provided. The listed emotions are the ones you will be using and applying in this workshop.

Positive Emotions and Feelings

1) **Confident** _____

2) **Enthusiastic** _____

3) **Interested** _____

4) **Open-Minded** _____

Negative Emotions and Feelings

1) **Suspicious** _____

2) **Angry** _____

3) **Afraid** _____

4) **Apathetic** _____

Recognizing Emotions - Continued

Identified below are three different emotions from the previous page. Next to each emotion are words people might use when they feel the listed emotion. Next to the words are descriptions of how those words may be expressed. It's important to be able to distinguish between emotional levels by clues or indicators. There are no absolutes in human behavior, but for the most part, people are reasonably predictable. Identifying words and how they're used are good ways to recognize emotions. You will be using the examples on this page as a guideline for your next exercise.

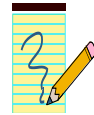
<u>Emotion</u>	<u>Words Used</u>	<u>How The Words Are Expressed</u>
Confident	<i>"Let's do it."</i> <i>"Absolutely."</i> <i>"I'm certain."</i> <i>"There's no question in my mind."</i> <i>"Yes, I'm sure."</i> <i>"I agree. Let's get started."</i> <i>"Count on my support."</i> <i>"You can bet on it."</i> <i>"Let's go."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong voice • Firm, upright posture • Good eye contact • High energy • Excellent self-control • Assertive • Strong presence • Self-assured • Committed
Open-Minded	<i>"Sure, I'll listen. No promises though."</i> <i>"Maybe it'll work."</i> <i>"No problem."</i> <i>"Come on by and we'll talk."</i> <i>"No big deal."</i> <i>"I'm open to any ideas you have."</i> <i>"Take your time and get back to me when you can."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm, laid-back approach • Nice, friendly manner • Posture is relaxed • Good eye contact • Non-committal • Moderate voice tone • Polite and unhurried
Apathetic	<i>"I'm not interested."</i> <i>"It makes no difference."</i> <i>"It's a waste of time."</i> <i>"I'm not involved."</i> <i>"Who cares."</i> <i>"It won't work."</i> <i>"Why bother."</i> <i>"It's not important."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor or no eye contact • Low energy level • Slow, listless speech • Poor, slumping posture • Won't communicate • No voice inclination • No attention span

Recognizing Emotions - Continued

In your small group, talk out-loud and discuss the words that people typically use for each of the emotions listed below. Use the spaces provided to write some of them down. Also note the way in which the words you choose are expressed. You can use page 7 as a guideline.

<u><i>Emotion</i></u>	<u>Words Used</u>	<u>How The Words Are Expressed</u>
Enthusiastic	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Interested	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Suspicious	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Angry	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Afraid	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Listening Responses Exercise



Being a good listener also means you have to be a good talker to create words and expressions in others for you to observe and listen to. How you respond to what the other person is feeling and saying goes a long way toward creating or breaking rapport.

There are many different kinds of listening responses. Some are used habitually, and the meaning is reflected more in the manner in which it is spoken rather than the actual words. Others are carefully constructed so the words and the actual definition are what you want to focus on.

Listed below are responses that are occasionally used in conversations. Read each one and circle the number that best describes how frequently you use that response on the job. Once you've completed this exercise, you will work in a small group to discuss each of the phrases and determine if there are better words and phrases you can use. It's important to be aware of the words you typically use as a listening response so you can learn what other people think about your choice of words.

<u>I generally use phrases similar to:</u>	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Never</u>		
1. "You should . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
2. "You're wrong . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
3. "You better . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
4. "What you need to do . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
5. "The best thing to do now is . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
6. "My recommendation is . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
7. "Your problem is . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
8. "You feel the way you do because . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
9. "I know you don't really mean . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
10. "Yes, but . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
11. "But, what about . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
12. "You know, you should consider . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
13. "Where did you get that information . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
14. "I don't believe . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
15. "Are you sure . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
16. "I know how you feel . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
17. "You're really defensive about . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
18. "So you feel . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
19. "You are mistaken about . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
20. "Be serious . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
21. "Don't be so naive about . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
22. "Don't waste your . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
23. "My way is better . . ."	1	2	3	4	5
24. "It's not true . . ."	1	2	3	4	5