

TYPES OF LISTENERS, BARRIERS TO LISTENING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LISTENING

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TYPES OF LISTENERS

NON-LISTENERS

- A non-listener doesn't intend to listen to you, doesn't hear, and doesn't make an effort to pay attention. The non-listener would rather do all the talking. As a result, this person constantly interrupts the speaker and always attempts to have the last word. A non-listener may offer you blank stares and demonstrate nervous mannerisms while you're speaking, and may even fake attention during a conversation. However, it will become clear that this person isn't paying attention when they respond incorrectly or inappropriately. Non-listeners are generally not liked because their lack of effort shows a lack of respect for what others have to say.

SUPERFICIAL LISTENERS

- A superficial listener hears what you're saying but doesn't grasp the point you're making. A superficial listener listens only for the basic meaning of the spoken words and takes no notice of body language, voice tone, and other subtle forms of communication. Most often, superficial listeners are busy thinking about what they want to say next. You might get the impression that they do understand what you're saying, which can lead to confusion and mistakes. People who listen superficially often search for an excuse to avoid conversation or difficult discussions.

LOGICAL LISTENERS

- Logical listeners make an effort to hear what you're saying and to comprehend the meaning of the actual words. However, they don't understand your intent or the meaning behind your words. Because they don't receive messages from vocal intonation, body language, or facial expressions, they miss important components of what a speaker is trying to communicate. Logical listeners need to concentrate more on the nonverbal communication accompanying speech

ACTIVE LISTENERS

- Listening actively requires concentration and emotional effort. Active listeners won't judge you as you speak, but will try their best to understand what you're saying and why you're saying it. In other words, they'll respect your point of view. They'll listen for the intent and emotions behind the words so that they can better understand your line of thought.

BARRIERS TO LISTENING

PHYSIOLOGICAL BARRIERS

- Physiology means the state of human body and mind. Physiological barriers of communication occur due to the physical condition of sender or receiver which might even be physical disabilities. It includes sensory dysfunction and other physical dysfunctions.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

- Physical barrier is the environmental and natural condition that act as a barrier in communication in sending message from sender to receiver. Organizational environment or interior workspace design problems, technological problems and noise are the parts of physical barriers.
- These are referred to distraction in the averment such as the sound of an air conditioner, cigarette smoke, or an overheated room, which interfere with the listening process. They could also be in the form of information overload.

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

- Attitudes are commonly formed by an individual's opinions or personal feelings on a subject or person and can be difficult to alter. When attitudinal barriers override the sense of professionalism in a workplace, it can become difficult for a group to engage in productive communication.
- One attitudinal barrier is pre occupation. It means the state or condition of being preoccupied or engrossed with something. This results in the difficulty to focus one's attention completely on what speaker is saying. Another common attitudinal barrier is egocentrism, or the belief that you are more knowledgeable than the speaker and that you have nothing new to learn from

WRONG ASSUMPTIONS

- The success of communication depends on both the sender and receiver. It is wrong to assume that communication is the sole responsibility of the sender or the speaker and that listeners have no role to play. Such an assumption can create a barrier to listening. For example, a brilliant speech or presentation, however well delivered, is wasted if the receiver is not listening at the other end. Listeners have as much responsibility as speakers to make the communication successful, by paying attention, seeking clarifications, and giving feedback.
- Another wrong assumption is to think that listening is a passive activity, in which a listener merely hears the thoughts of the speaker. On the contrary, real listening or active listening is hard work - it requires speaking, sometimes asking questions, agreeing or disagreeing with the speaker, giving feedback, etc.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

- Wherever we live, you're going to be influenced by the attitudes, customs and practices of the people around us. Those basic elements are the definition of culture. When a person of one culture encounters the beliefs and resulting actions of another culture, a clash can occur. This is known as cultural barrier.
- Accents can be barriers to listening, since they interfere with the ability to understand the meaning of words that are pronounced differently.

GENDER BARRIERS

- Communication research has shown that gender can be barrier to listening. Studies have revealed that men and women listen very differently and for different purposes. Women are more likely to listen for the emotion behind a speaker's words, when men listen more for the facts and the content. Example:- a salesperson giving a demonstration of a new type of office equipment may be asked by two colleagues if the equipment will work without problem and respond by saying —sure. A male user may take this at face value, whereas the female user may detect some hesitation in his voice. This is because the male users listen for the content of the message, whereas the female users listen for the tone of the message

LACK OF TRAINING

- Listening is not an inborn skill. People are not born good listeners. They have to develop the art of listening through practice and training. Lack of training in listening skills is an important barrier to listening, in the Indian context.

BAD LISTENING HABBITTS

- Most people are very average listeners who have developed poor listening habits that are hard to said and that act as barriers to listening. For example, some people have the habits of —faking|| attention, or trying to look like a listeners, in order to impress the speaker and to assure him that they are paying attention. Others may tend to listen to each and every fact and, as a result, mis out on the main point.

BRINGING IN EMOTIONS

- Emotions erect barriers to effective communication. A listener's senses are not likely to be functioning at their optimum level when he or she is angry. Likewise, it is not possible to understand or appreciate what the speaker is saying if the listener is excessively sad.

FEAR

- Fear is a great barrier to listening. People who are afraid during a conversation are not likely to listen. They become defensive and tend to argue.

EFFECTIVENESS OF LISTENING

INTRODUCTION

- In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to one another. Genuine listening has become a rare gift—the gift of time. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At work, effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time. At home, it helps develop resourceful, self-reliant kids who can solve their own problems. Listening builds friendships and careers.

Step 1: Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.

- Eye contact occurs when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time. In human beings, eye contact is a form of nonverbal communication and is thought to have a large influence on social behaviour. This term came from the West in mid 1960s. This term defines the act as a meaningful and important sign of confidence, respect, and social communication. Eye Contact provides some of the strongest emotions during a social conversation. It provides details on emotions and intentions. Prolonged eye contact can tell someone you are interested in what they have to say.

Step 2: Be attentive, but relaxed.

- Now that you've made eye contact, relax. You don't have to stare fixedly at the other person. You can look away now and then and carry on like a normal person. The important thing is to be attentive. Mentally screen out distractions, like background activity and noise. In addition, try not to focus on the speaker's accent or speech mannerisms to the point where they become distractions. Finally, don't be distracted by your own thoughts, feelings, or biases.

Step 3: Keep an open mind.

- Listen without judging the other person or mentally criticizing the things she tells you. Listen without jumping to conclusions. Remember that the speaker is using language to represent the thoughts and feelings inside his or her brain. Don't be a sentence-grabber.

Step 4: Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

- Allow your mind to create a mental model of the information being communicated. Your brain will do the necessary work if you stay focused, with senses fully alert. When listening for long stretches, concentrate on, and remember, key words and phrases. Finally, concentrate on what is being said, even if it bores you. If your thoughts start to wander, immediately force yourself to refocus.

Step 5: Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

- When you don't understand something, of course you should ask the speaker to explain it to you. But rather than interrupt, wait until the speaker pauses. Then say something like, —Back up a second. I didn't understand what you just said about...‖

Step 6: Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.

- If you feel sad when the person with whom you are talking expresses sadness, joyful when she expresses joy, fearful when she describes her fears—and convey those feelings through your facial expressions and words—then your effectiveness as a listener is assured. Empathy is the heart and soul of good listening.
- To experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's place and allow yourself to feel what it is like to *be her* at that moment. This is not an easy thing to do. It takes energy and concentration. But it is a generous and helpful thing to do, and it facilitates communication like nothing else does.

Step 7: Give the speaker regular feedback.

- Show that you understand where the speaker is coming from by reflecting the speaker's feelings. Or just nod and show your understanding through appropriate facial expressions and an occasional well-timed —hmmm|| or —uh huh.||
- The idea is to give the speaker some proof that you are listening, and that you are following her train of thought—not off indulging in your own fantasies while she talks to the ether.
- In task situations, regardless of whether at work or home, always restate instructions and messages to be sure you understand correctly.

Step 8: Pay attention to what *isn't* said—to nonverbal cues.

- If you exclude email, the majority of direct communication is probably nonverbal. We glean a great deal of information about each other without saying a word. Even over the telephone, you can learn almost as much about a person from the tone and cadence of her voice than from anything she says. When I talk to my best friend, it doesn't matter what we chat about, if I hear a lilt and laughter in her voice, I feel reassured that she's doing well.
- Face to face with a person, you can detect enthusiasm, boredom, or irritation very quickly in the expression around the eyes, the set of the mouth, the slope of the shoulders. These are clues you can't ignore. When listening, remember that words convey only a fraction of the message.

THANK YOU !