Listening: More Than Meets the Ear

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Today’s Topics:

- Elements in the listening process
- Types of ineffective listening
- Why we don’t listen
- Informational listening
- Listening to help
Elements in the listening process

- Hearing
- Attending
- Understanding
- Responding
- Remembering
Types of Ineffective Listening

- **Pseudolistening** - appearance of listening
- **Stage-Hogging** - turns topic to self
- **Selective listening** - reject all that does not interest you
- **Insulated listening** - don’t want to deal with it
- **Defensive listening** - remarks = attacks
- **Ambushing** - information = attack
- **Insensitive listening**
Why we don’t listen

- Message Overload -
- Preoccupation
- Rapid thought
- Effort
- External noise
- Hearing problems
- Faulty assumptions
Why we don’t listen, cont.

- Lack of apparent advantage --
- Speaking = control, admiration, respect, liking, release of energy
- Listening = helps others solve problems, encourages them to listen to you
- Lack of training
Informational Listening

- In order to become a more effective informational listener we need to:
  - Talk Less
  - Get rid of distractions
  - Don’t judge others
  - Look for key ideas
  - Ask questions
  - Paraphrase
Listening to Help

- Advising – our first response, but not always a good idea. Most people just want to be heard.
- If you are going to give advice despite this:
  - 1) Make sure it is accurate
  - 2) Ask yourself if the person is willing to accept your advice.
  - 3) Be confident that the receiver won’t blame you if the advice does not work.
A judging response evaluates the speaker’s thoughts or behaviors – You are on the right track now.

Judgments have the best chance of being received if:

1) The person with the problem requested the evaluation.

2) The intent of your judgment is constructive versus a put-down.
Analyzing offers an interpretation of the speaker’s message, however, your interpretation might be incorrect.

Analysis guidelines

1) tentative versus matter of fact
2) have a reasonable chance of being correct
3) Is the other person receptive to analysis?
4) Is your motive to help?
Questioning

Question responses help others think about the problem and understand it more clearly.

Guidelines

1) Don’t ask just to satisfy your curiosity
2) Questions shouldn’t confuse or distract
3) Don’t use questions to disguise your suggestions or criticism.
Supporting Responses

- Supporting – reveals a listener’s solidarity with the speaker’s situation.
- You are not being supportive if:
  1) You deny other’s the right to their feelings. “Don’t worry about it.”
  2) You minimize the significance of the situation. “It’s only _________!”
  3) Focusing on the future rather than the current moment.
4) You cast judgment. “You shouldn’t have done that.”
5) You defend yourself. “Don’t blame me!”
6) You rain on the speaker’s parade.

Guidelines for effective supporting:
1) You can support even if you don’t approve.
2) Monitor the other’s reaction to your support.
Prompting Responses

- Drawing out others with brief statements of encouragement and silence.
- This is a catalyst to help others find their own answer.
- Prompting must be done sincerely or it will be ineffective.
Paraphrasing

- Reflect both the thoughts and feelings you hear expressed as well as information.

Factors to Consider:

- 1) Is the problem complex enough?
- 2) Do you have the necessary time and concern?
- 3) Are you genuinely interested in helping?
- 4) Can you withhold judgment?
- 5) When overused, paraphrasing is annoying.
When and How to Help

Three factors to consider when choosing the best helping style:

1) Match your response to the situation.
2) Think about the other person and their willingness to handle the help.
3) Think about yourself. Most people rely on one or two styles without considering them all.