

## Chapter 4 Listening Skills

“The reason why we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may listen the more and talk the less”. (Zeno of Citium)

The importance of listening is paramount, be it when interacting with your customers or speaking to peers subordinate, or boss.

Definition: The active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages

### Need for listening

Listening is the neglected communication skill. While all of us have had instruction in reading, writing and speaking, few have had any formal instruction in listening.

Of all the communication we spend the following percentage of time in- writing 10 %, reading 15 %, talking 30 % and listening 45 %

From an organization point of view , listening helps in following ways:

- Improves policy making for the employees: Before making any kind of policy decisions, it is important to listen to the employees and grasp the issues.
- Makes decisions better and faster: when organization listens to the problems of the employees or customers, it becomes easy for them to take decisions and provide solutions to their problems.
- Eases the flow of communication

### Listening vs Hearing

- Hearing = simply the process by which sound waves hit the eardrum. The mind does not register the message.
- Listening = "**Listening** is more complex than merely **hearing**. It is a process that consists of **four stages**: sensing and attending, understanding and interpreting, remembering, and responding . . . The stages occur in sequence but we are generally unaware of them

### There are four *elements* of good listening:

- *Attention* - the focused perception of both visual and verbal stimuli
- *Hearing* - the physiological act of 'opening the gates to your ears'
- *Understanding* - assigning meaning to the messages received
- *Remembering and responding* - the storing of meaningful information and reverting with feedback

## **Process of listening**

- **Sensing / receiving**
- **Interpreting**
- **Evaluating**
- **Remembering**
- **Responding**

## **TYPES OF LISTENING**

### **1 - Discriminative Listening**

- Basic form of listening.
- Identify difference between different sounds.
- Discriminate by identifying various sounds, emotions, body language, tone.
- Discriminate between various sounds and sights.

### **2 - Content Listening**

- A.k.a. comprehension listening, full listening, informative listening
- To comprehend, one requires knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and syntax.
- Same is true for body language. To understand what a person is really trying to say.
- extraction of key facts and items from a long spiel

### **3- Critical listening:**

- In order to evaluate, judge, form opinion about what is being said
- Judgements includes assessing strengths, weaknesses, agreement & approval
- Requires cognitive effort ( analyzing along with simultaneous listening
- We make judgements, seek to assess the truth and also judge what they say against our values
- Assessing them as good or bad, worthy or unworthy
- Particularly pertinent when the other person is trying to persuade us, perhaps to change our behavior. We also discriminate between subtleties of language and comprehend the inner meaning of what is said. We weigh up the pros and cons of an argument, determining whether it make sense logically as well as weather it is helpful to us. Evaluate listening is also called as judgemental or interpretive or evaluative listening.

### **4- Empathetic listening:**

- We go beyond sympathy to seek a truer understand how others are feeling.
- This requires excellent discrimination and close attention to the nuances of emotional signals.

- When we are being truly empathetic, we actually feel what they are feeling.
- In order to get others to get their thoughts, we also need to demonstrate our empathy in our demeanor towards them, asking sensitively and in a way that encourages self disclosure.

#### 5 - Biased Listening

- Biased listening happens when the person hears only what they want to hear
- Typically misinterpreting what the other person says based on the stereotypes and other biases that they have.
- Such biased listening is often very evaluative in nature.

#### 6 - Appreciative Listening

- In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which we will appreciate
- For example that which helps meet our need of recreation, or inspiration. And hence we listen to good music, poetry or maybe even the stirring words of a great leader.

#### 7-Sympathetic Listening

- We care about the other person and show this concern in the way we pay close attention and express our sorrow for their ills and happiness at their joys.