The Power of Listening

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What is Listening?

• Listening:
  • Receiving and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages
  • To hear something with thoughtful attention
• Effective communication is **2-way**
  • Depends on speaking **and** listening
Listening vs. Hearing

• **Hearing** – passive

• **Listening** – active; learned process; a skill
  • You must choose to participate in the process of listening.
Fast Facts

• We listen at 125-250 wpm, and think at 1000-3000 wpm.
• 75% of the time we are distracted or forgetful.
• 20% of the time, we remember what we hear.
• More than 35% of businesses think listening is a top skill for success.
Why Be a Good Listener?

• Listening is the most powerful form of acknowledgment
  • …a way of saying, “You are important.”
• Listening creates acceptance and openness
  • …conveys the message that “I am not judging you.”
• Listening reduces stress and tension
  • …minimizes confusion and misunderstanding, eliminating related stress and tension.
• Listening is CRITICAL in conflict resolution
  • …much conflict comes from the need to be heard. Successful resolution depends on being a non-anxious presence.
Barriers to Listening

• Pre-judging the speaker
  • Ex: too boring, disorganized, uninteresting topic, etc.

• External distractions
  • Ex: e-mail, twitter, texting, Facebook, another conversation, etc.

• Mentally preparing response

• Language/culture differences

• Faking attention
  • Ex. daydreaming
Active Listening

• Allows you to make sure you hear the words and understand the meaning behind the words
• **Goal:** Go beyond listening to understanding
Active Listening

1. Listen
2. Question
3. Reflect-paraphrase
4. Agree that idea is understood
Step 1: Listen

• To feelings as well as words
  • Words – Emotions – Implications

• Focus on speaker
  • Don’t plan, speak, or get distracted
  • Put away distractions such as cell phone, reading materials, Facebook, etc.
  • Look them in the eye

• What is speaker talking about?
  • Topic? Speaker? Listener? Others?
Active Listening Requires . . .

• Verbal encouragement
  • Encouragement gives permission, requests additional information, and provides direction.
  • Examples include statements like "Can you tell me more about that?" Or "I'm curious about ...”

• Non-verbal encouragement
  • Body language.
  • Non-verbal "encouragement" behaviors include nodding your head, leaning forward and eye contact.
  • Facial expressions, like smiles, are used.
Step 2: Question

• 3 Purposes
  • Demonstrate you are listening
  • Gather information
  • Clarification

• Open-ended questions are best
  • “Tell me more.”
  • “How did you feel?”
  • “Then what happened?”
Step 3: Reflect-Paraphrase

- Use a feedback loop to ensure accuracy
  - Restate, paraphrase, reword the person’s statement
- Reflect what is said (in your words)
- Reflect feelings
- Reframe
  - Capture the essence of the communication
  - Remove negative framing
  - Move toward problem-solving
Step 4: Agree

• Get speaker’s consent to your reframing
  • Ex: “So, you need help with…” “Yes.”
• Speaker has been heard and knows it!
  • Ex: “We have …, will that work?”
• Solution is near!
  • Ex: “I can help you with that…”
Needs of the Customer

- To be **recognized** and **remembered**
- To feel **valued**
- To feel **appreciated**
- To feel **respected**
- To feel **understood**
- To feel **comfortable** about a want or need
Conclusion

- Remember that the objective of all of this is to increase **understanding** of the patron’s need so that you will be able to serve them more adequately.