



# Mindful Listening

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*The average person retains only about 25-50% of what they hear, showcasing the challenge and importance of effective listening in communication.*

## Mindful Listening

*Mindful listening is the art of paying complete attention to the speaker, both verbally and nonverbally, without judgment or distraction. It's about truly understanding their message and perspective, **creating a space for collaborative conversation and stronger relationships.***

## Identify your Listening Style

1. **Detached Listener:** This listener appears emotionally uninvolved and struggles to connect with the speaker's feelings. They might seem aloof or disinterested.
2. **Reactive Listener:** This listener reacts impulsively based on emotions. They might interrupt frequently or become defensive if they disagree with the speaker.
3. **Responsible Listener:** This listener focuses primarily on completing tasks or achieving goals. They may miss the emotional undercurrent of the conversation or overlook creative solutions.
4. **Receptive Listener:** This listener actively listens and seeks understanding. They ask thoughtful questions, show empathy, and are open to new ideas.

## Roadblocks to Effective Listening

- **Internal Critic:** Amplifying flaws in the message when we don't hear what we want.
- **Emotional Triggers:** Strong emotions cloud our judgment and make us defensive.
- **Multitasking:** Prevents us from fully absorbing the speaker's message.
- **Anticipating:** We lose focus as we plan what to say next, formulate counter-arguments to push our agenda or to validate ourselves.

## The 6 Levels of Listening

*Active listening goes beyond simply being quiet. It involves intentionally engaging with the speaker.*

- **Safe Space:** Create a comfortable and distraction-free environment. Listen openly without interrupting or forming judgments prematurely.
- **Nonverbal Cues:** Pay attention to body language and tone of voice for deeper understanding.
- **Social Awareness:** Recognize the speaker's emotions and empathize with their perspective.
- **Asking Questions:** Use open-ended questions to clarify understanding and avoid assumptions.
- **Conversational Engagement:** Build a dialogue by actively bouncing ideas back and forth, fostering curiosity and mutual learning.
- **Collaborative Feedback:** Offer constructive feedback after earning the speaker's trust, building upon their ideas rather than simply criticizing them.

*Being a good listener involves a balance between active listening and thoughtful inquiry.*

## The Benefits of Mindful Listening

1. **Improved Understanding:** Gain a clear picture of the speaker's message, reducing misunderstandings.
2. **Stronger Relationships:** Build trust and empathy, fostering deeper connections.
3. **Effective Communication:** Create a space for collaboration and problem-solving.
4. **Better Decision-Making:** Consider all perspectives, leading to more informed choices.

*"The only reason we have two ears and one mouth is that we're supposed to listen twice as much as we talk."*



# The Art of Mindful Listening

by Cecilia Delapierre

## Tired of Feeling Like Conversations Go In One Ear and Out the Other? Master Active Listening and Unlock the Power of Connection!

Ever feel like you're having the same conversation on repeat? Your partner vents about work, you nod sympathetically, then ten minutes later they're asking if you even heard a word! Sound familiar?

The answer lies in the often-overlooked superpower of **active listening**. It's not just about sitting quietly (although that's a good start!). It's about becoming a **symphony conductor for the conversation**, guiding it towards understanding and connection. Here's the thing: most of us have a natural "listening style" that can sometimes hinder this beautiful harmony.



The world is awash in information, and our ability to process it effectively is crucial. **Self-awareness** is key to effective active listening. When we understand our own emotions, biases, and triggers, we can enter conversations with a clear and open mind. This fosters a "collaborative conversation" where both parties feel heard and understood.

### Master the Symphony of Communication: Unveiling Your Listening Style

**The Passive Observer:** This listener appears emotionally uninvolved and struggles to connect with the speaker. They might seem aloof or disinterested. **Action Step:** Focus on the speaker's nonverbal cues like body language and tone of voice. This can reveal emotional undercurrents and help you connect on a deeper level.

**The Defensive Guard:** This listener is quick to react and shut down opposing views. They might interrupt frequently or become defensive if they disagree with the speaker. **Action Step:** Shift from React to Reflect. Before launching into a defense, take a deep breath and consider the speaker's perspective. Ask clarifying questions to ensure you fully understand their message.

**The Fixer:** This listener focuses primarily on completing tasks or achieving goals. They may miss the emotional undercurrent of the conversation or overlook creative solutions. **Action Step:** Acknowledge the goal, but don't rush the conversation. Sometimes, the most productive outcome lies in fostering a deeper understanding.

**The Bridge Builder:** This listener actively listens and seeks understanding. They ask thoughtful questions, show empathy, and are open to new ideas. **Action Step:** Sharpen your skills! Actively listen to opposing viewpoints, seeking common ground and collaboration. This expands your perspective and fosters stronger connections.

## LEVEL UP

*to maestro*

**Set the Stage:** Put away distractions, make eye contact, and create a comfortable space for open communication.

**Become a Body Language Detective:** Notice crossed arms, furrowed brows, or changes in pitch. Nonverbal cues can reveal a lot about the speaker's emotions.

**Ask Open-Ended Questions** (like "Can you elaborate on that?") to clarify understanding and avoid assumptions. This shows genuine interest and encourages the speaker to delve deeper.



**Conversational Engagement:** This is not a monologue! Actively bounce ideas back and forth. This fosters curiosity, mutual learning, and keeps the conversation flowing naturally.

**Collaborative Feedback:** Once you've established trust, offer constructive feedback that builds upon the speaker's ideas. Remember, it's about collaboration.

**P**odcasts offer diverse viewpoints and information. Actively listen to one on an interesting topic, noting how the host facilitates conversation, asks insightful questions, and guides the dialogue. Notice how viewpoints are presented and the host builds on ideas— **active listening in action!**

practice