

“Be slow to speak and quick to listen” (James 1:19)

L	Limit Your Lip	By talking less you give the other person the opportunity to express his or her thoughts. A philosopher once said, “We have been given two ears and but a single mouth, in order that we may hear more and talk less.”
I	Identify Key Issues	Effective listeners use their “spare thinking time” to extract the main thought from the speaker’s words and behavior. They ask themselves questions such as: “How does he feel?” “What does this mean to her?”
S	Silence Distractions	Listening distractions can be external—ringing cell phones and doorbells, radio, TV, or other conversations—or internal—preoccupation with other thoughts, fatigue, and/or stress. Effective listeners do everything possible to silence the internal and external distractions that can hinder their ability to listen.
T	Table Conclusions	When the speaker’s ideas differ from our own, we are tempted to make snap judgements. Instead of exchanging ideas, conversations turn into verbal combat with “opponents” trying to conquer and claim victory for their point of view. Effective listeners table their conclusions until they understand the speaker’s point of view.
E	Echo and Inquire	Effective listeners check to make sure they are decoding the speaker’s thoughts and feelings accurately by reflecting their understanding back to the speaker for verification (echo), and by asking questions (inquire). They do not conclude that they understand until the speaker clarifies and verifies the listener’s decoding.
N	Negate Defensiveness	The listener’s goal in listening is to understand the speaker’s perspective—what the speaker thinks and feels and why he or she feels that way. The goal is not to defend, give a rebuttal, or counterattack. Effective listeners receive messages non-defensively.

Assuming Alice assumes that she knows what you think and feel. Alice could finish all your sentences. She does not hear when you offer new or different information.

Defensive Dana is distrustful and touchy. She sees your remarks as personal attacks. Dana perceives that you are out to get her, so she’s closed to hearing anything you have to say about her behavior.

Ambushing Amanda appears to listen carefully, but only because she is collecting information with which to attack you. She hears your words, but her goal is to use them later as ammunition.

ineffective listening habits

Do you LOVE to listen?



Remember that active listening means giving your undivided attention - hearing with your ears, observing with your eyes, and understanding with your heart.

Self-centered Samantha manages to turn any conversation into an opportunity to showcase her own accomplishments and perspectives. All that matters to Sam is that you know what she thinks.

Solution Sally knows how to fix everything. Before she has even heard you out, she knows what you ought to do.

Denying Darla denies the significance of situations and your right to your feelings. “You shouldn’t feel that way” and “Don’t make such a big deal out of it” are her mottos.