

L-I-S-T-E-N to Avoid Communication Breakdown

Poor listening habits account for a large percentage of communication breakdowns. How many times have you found yourself saying “You never told me?” If you want to listen so you really HEAR what others say, make sure you’re not a:

Rehearser: You mentally prepare for “Here’s what I’ll say next” and subsequently tune out what else is being said.

Judger: The burden of listening is on the listener. Don’t automatically condemn a speaker or the subject as uninteresting; don’t prejudice your listening because you don’t like the speaker’s looks, hairdo, and voice and so on.

Daydreamer: You have that “deer in the headlights look” leading to an embarrassing “What did you say?” or “Could you repeat that?”

Placater: Agreeing with everything you hear just to be nice or to avoid conflict does not mean you’re a good listener.

Changer: You change the subject so quickly that the speaker believes you’re not interested in what he/she has to say.

Selector: You filter out what you don’t want to hear.

Defender: You don’t hear all of what someone has to say because a single comment made by the speaker has upset you.

Faker: Don’t pretend to be getting the message while your mind has made a mental detour and is busy with completely different ideas. If the speaker tries to interact with you at this point, you’ll find yourself completely lost.

I offer the challenge to avoid these bad habits and develop your listening skills. Listening is a skill that can be improved with practice, practice, and more practice.

- Bill Conner

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