



HOW TO **LISTEN EFFECTIVELY**

Workbook



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**

Success
COMMUNICATION
Series



Success **COMMUNICATION** Series

“How to Listen Effectively”
is a module of Toastmasters
International’s *Success/
Communication Series* made
possible by the Ralph C.
Smedley Memorial Fund.®

HOW TO LISTEN EFFECTIVELY

Workbook

© 2017 Toastmasters International. All rights reserved. Toastmasters International, the Toastmasters International logo, and all other Toastmasters International trademarks and copyrights are the sole property of Toastmasters International and may be used only with permission.

Rev. 4/2017 Item 242B

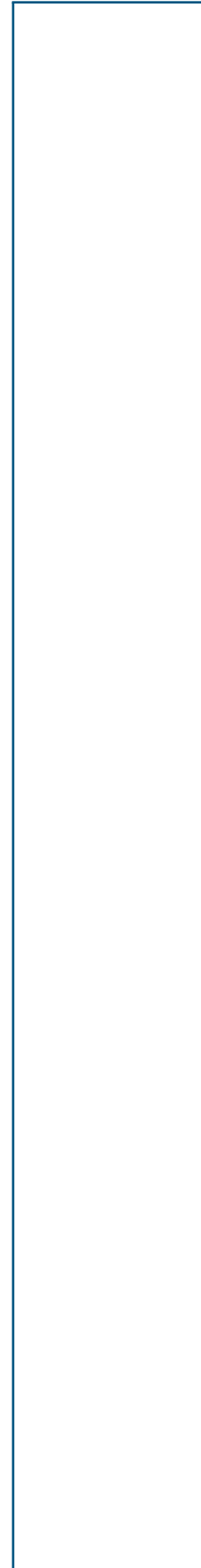


**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**

www.toastmasters.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- How to Listen Effectively**4
 - Why Effective Listening is Important to You5
 - Group Exercise A5
- How to Listen Effectively**6
 - Group Exercise B6
 - Technique Number One7
 - Group Exercise C7
 - Technique Number Two8
 - Group Exercise D8
 - Technique Number Three8
 - Technique Number Four9
 - Technique Number Five9
 - Exercise E9
 - Technique Number Six10
 - Technique Number Seven10
 - Group Exercise F11
 - Technique Number Eight11
 - Technique Number Nine12
 - Group Exercise G12
- Exercise Topics**13
- Ten Points to Remember for Effective Listening**14



HOW TO LISTEN EFFECTIVELY

This is your workbook for helping you develop your listening skills. The exercises here all correspond to the lesson activities to be presented by your session leader. This booklet is yours to keep, so use it for your own personal benefit.

As you listen to the session leader present each of the topics in turn, use the margin of your workbook to make notes for your own use about what you hear. Write down any key points, important concepts, and useful ideas you discover. Make a conscious effort to remember them and make them a part of your everyday listening processes.

When your session leader asks you to do so, work the exercises.

You can benefit most from the workshop in the following ways:

1. Pay close attention to the session leader's directions.
2. Take an active part in the discussions and activities.
3. Do not monopolize the discussion, or take too much of the group's time on any one specific point. Help the session leader keep the session moving and on track.
4. Respect the ideas and viewpoints of others, and encourage them to take part fully.
5. Stretch your mind and learn as much as you can. Remember that you are the one who is really in charge of your learning process.

WHY EFFECTIVE LISTENING IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

Just as in speaking, you are not born with the ability to listen effectively. Listening skills can be learned.

Most people do not listen well because they lack effective listening skills. They spend 80 percent of their waking hours communicating in some manner. Of that time, approximately 45 percent is spent listening.

Listening is transient. If you don't understand something the first time it's spoken, generally there is no opportunity to have it repeated so you can capture the message.

Ineffective listening is the cause of many accidents and production breakdowns, lost sales and lost customers, personality clashes and poor morale, poor communications and misguided management.

Poor listening habits are often attributed to lack of training. You listen the way you do because you have learned to listen that way. Without training and instruction most people do not learn effective listening skills. But with focused instruction and practice, your listening skills can be improved significantly.

You can start to improve the quality of your listening by being made aware of the facts about listening and the process of listening. How you receive and interpret verbal information as well as how you realize how you can enhance your listening knowledge, attitudes, and skills and then apply them in all your communication activities, will become readily apparent.

Listening is the predominant communication activity you engage in throughout your lifetime. It determines your success in personal and family relations, in business, in society, in government, and in international affairs. Effective listening skills must be taught. And that is the purpose of the program ... to help you become an effective listener.

Group Exercise A. Instructions will be provided by the session leader.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER ONE:

It's important that you learn to _____
_____.

A person who likes to listen acts like a good listener. Your coordinator will give you the five actions practiced by an effective listener.

1. Focus your eyes on _____.
2. Be attentive. If you happen to be sitting, _____
_____.
3. Respond with appropriate facial _____
to show you are enjoying listening to what the other person has to say.
4. Encourage the speaker by asking _____
_____.
5. React to _____.

*Please read the following instructions for **Group Exercise C**. If you have any questions, ask the session leader.*

1. In this exercise you and one other person will take turns speaking and listening. You will tell your partner who has had the greatest influence on your life and why. At the end of the three minutes, the session leader will ask you and your partner to reverse roles. The speaker becomes the listener and the listener becomes the speaker.
2. At the conclusion of the speaking and listening portions of this exercise, the session leader will ask you to exchange workbooks with your partner. You will have two minutes to provide a written evaluation of how your partner listened to your talk. What was his or her behavior? Describe it. Suggest improvements.

Use the following lines to write evaluation comments on how your partner listened to your presentation. Describe his or her listening behavior.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER TWO:

When you are listening, you may have to overcome distractions that interfere with your attention.

Learn to _____.

The best way to ignore distractions is to concentrate carefully on what is being said. Three things you can do to ignore distractions are:

1. Visually and mentally _____ on the speaker and what he or she is saying.
2. Listen with your _____ as well as with your ears.
3. Tell yourself, " _____"
_____."

Group Exercise D. Instructions will be provided by the session leader.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER THREE:

When a person begins to speak, listen for clarity and organization, then _____

_____ what the speaker is saying.

1. Listen for the _____ points.
2. Pick out _____ words.

Methods for summarizing:

1. Concentrate on ideas rather than _____.
2. Mentally _____ or take written notes.
3. Compare and _____.

4. Think ahead of the _____.
5. _____ the points you listen to.
6. Create an _____.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER FOUR:

When we listen, we have to deal with the speaker's emotions as well as our own.

Learn to _____.

Concepts on controlling emotion:

- ▶ Controlling emotion is a _____ attitude.
- ▶ Settle on an appropriate _____ of emotion.

The answer to controlling your emotions in a listening situation is to interpret emotionally charged words and not let yourself get hung up on them. It is an objective evaluating process that follows interpreting what you have heard the speaker say.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER FIVE:

Learn to eliminate hasty _____.

Try to place yourself and your thinking in accord with the speaker. Consciously work at listening from his or her point of view.

- ▶ The alternative to making hasty judgments is _____.
- ▶ Avoid _____ listening at any cost.

Exercise E. Use the space at the back of this workbook to compute an exercise in simple arithmetic that will be given to you by the session leader.

To help avoid making hasty judgments, be aware of the difference between a speaker's connotation and denotation in the use of words.

- ▶ _____ is the meaning of words through suggestion or implication.

- ▶ _____ is the specific or dictionary meaning of words.
- ▶ When people assign different meanings to the same word, _____ takes place.
- ▶ Understand the difference between fact and opinion.
 - A fact is a condition or event that can be _____.
 - An opinion cannot be _____ since it is an expression of a judgment.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER SIX:

Never interrupt and always listen to _____.

Give a speaker time to complete what he or she has to say. Here are ways in which we interrupt a speaker:

- ▶ When we argue mentally with a speaker.
- ▶ When we ponder something said while _____.
- ▶ When we _____ a statistic which is presented.
- ▶ When we don't remain _____ to reasons, arguments, and data.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER SEVEN:

Learn to inspire _____.

Ways to inspire openness in the speaker:

- ▶ Look at the _____.
- ▶ Nod in _____.
- ▶ Smile when you hear something you _____.
- ▶ Communicate your _____.
- ▶ Look _____.
- ▶ React _____ to the speaker.

- ▶ Empathize.
- ▶ In other words, act like a _____ .

Three methods for obtaining information:

1. Ask questions: _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , and _____ .
2. Tell the speaker where you lack _____ on a subject.
3. Respond to what is said. Ask if you have _____ and _____ correctly.

*Please read the following instructions which apply to **Group Exercise F**. If you have any questions, ask the session leader.*

1. In this exercise you and one other person will take turns speaking and listening. You will tell your partner how to define personal success and what steps you have taken to move toward personal success.
2. At the end of three minutes, the session leader will ask you and your partner to reverse roles. The speaker becomes the listener and the listener becomes the speaker.
3. At the conclusion of the speaking and listening portions of this exercise, the session leader will ask you to exchange workbooks with your partner. You will have two minutes to write down your reactions to your partner's listening to you during your presentation. You will then return your partner's workbook to him or her.

Use the following lines to write evaluation comments on how your partner listened to your presentation. Describe your partner's listening behavior.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER EIGHT:

Acknowledge the _____ to listen.

The need to listen is more of a mental attitude than a specific technique.

- ▶ If we mentally decide we need to listen to what's being said, chances are that we'll _____.
- ▶ If you develop the ability to tell yourself that you _____ you'll improve your listening.
- ▶ If you convince yourself that you _____, chances are you'll gain something by it.

TECHNIQUE NUMBER NINE:

Generate _____.

You have time available to you — mentally — as you listen. One of the most productive things you can do with that extra listening time is to generate conclusions about what you hear.

Conclusions are _____, thoughtful interpretations.

Group Exercise G for Technique Number Nine. Instructions will be provided by the session leader.

Use your mental time to generate conclusions based on:

- ▶ _____.
- ▶ _____.
- ▶ What the speaker actually _____.

The following is a review of the *Nine Techniques for Better Listening*. They are designed to help you achieve the goal of becoming a better listener.

Nine Techniques for Better Listening

- _____ 1. _____
- _____ 2. _____
- _____ 3. _____
- _____ 4. _____
- _____ 5. _____
- _____ 6. _____
- _____ 7. _____
- _____ 8. _____
- _____ 9. _____

EXERCISE TOPICS

The following topics may be used during Table Topics® speaking and listening exercises in this workshop.

1. What can we do to reduce juvenile delinquency in our community?
2. What can we do to alleviate the parking situation in the downtown area?
3. How can we make our streets safer?
4. What new laws should be established?
5. What existing laws should be eliminated?
6. What can we do to hold talented young people in our community?
7. What can we do to get a better supply of trained workers, secretaries, mechanics, etc., in this area?
8. What should be done to improve our local schools?
9. How can individual and/or mass transportation be improved in this area?
10. How can we get better people into our local government?
11. What should be the major goals for our city council or governing body? (Or other local agencies?)
12. How can pollution be controlled in this area?
13. Is the local hospital providing the service we need?
14. How can our police be more effective?
15. How can recreation facilities be expanded for our local residents?
16. What will it take to establish balance in the world's economy?
17. How can we interest the federal government in promoting and funding alternative energy sources?
18. How can we make manufacturers of dangerous chemicals accountable to populations threatened by their products?
19. What are the critical success factors necessary for the effective completion of our (company/ association) project?
20. How can government restore realistic costs of construction and purchase prices in today's real estate market?
21. What proposals should we make in negotiating our next union contract?
22. To what extent should the government involve itself in foreign politics?
23. How can we facilitate more open communication between management and staff employees?
24. Is it feasible to implement a law that provides for high quality day care centers for infants and small children of working parents?

25. How can we increase productivity and decrease costs in our organization?
26. What would be the point of a law requiring psychological testing of individuals in such public occupations as peace officers, fire fighters, teachers, social workers, and politicians?
27. What elements of time management should we cover in conducting seminars for employees and/or management in our organization?
28. How can we equalize tax structures by reflecting realistic assessment of individuals, businesses, corporations, and organizations according to a revised standard?
29. What role should religion play in a secular society?

TEN POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

1. Seek out areas of personal interest from what is being said.
2. Don't be turned off by poor delivery. Concentrate on the content of what is being said.
3. Don't enter into an argument or make a judgment until you have total comprehension.
4. Listen for concepts and main ideas.
5. Be flexible in how you summarize what the speaker is saying.
6. Show the speaker that you are interested and be active in your listening behavior.
7. Overcome distractions.
8. Learn to listen to and assimilate information that is demanding in scope and difficulty. Don't limit yourself to material that is easy to understand.
9. Don't become preoccupied with emotionally charged words.
10. Listen with your mind. Thought is faster than speech so anticipate, weigh evidence, listen to, and interpret the speaker's tone of voice and implications. Mentally summarize.



www.toastmasters.org