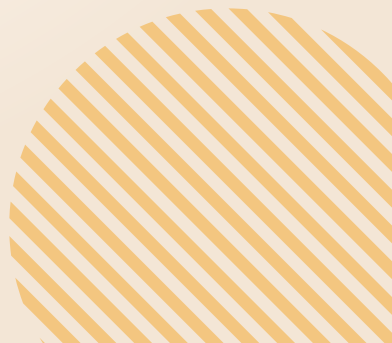




# LOUDER



RESOURCES



# THE GOOD LISTENER:

## EXPERTS GUIDE

### SHHHH...TIME TO LISTEN

Listening is the ability to precisely take in and decipher messages in the communication process -- listening is one of the most important skills that you can have. A large amount of our communication these days is electronic and as a result listening can feel like a lost art. Being a good listener is beneficial in all parts of your life including personal relationships and with your colleagues at work.

Many successful leaders and entrepreneurs credit their success to effective listening skills. Richard Branson often states that listening was one of the factors to Virgin's success.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS THAT I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE COURSE OF MY CAREER:

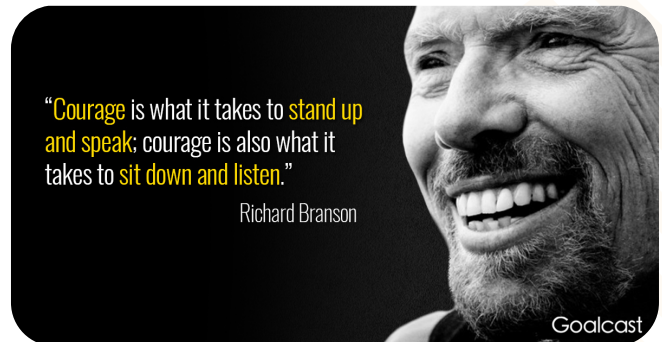
#### JUST LISTEN

Don't interrupt and don't jump in with solutions. Listen fully to what the person has to say and be present in the moment! Let the other person speak until the message has been fully said. Just listening will show that you value what the other person is saying. Don't feel that you have to think about what to say next and have the last word, many times we catch ourselves focusing so heavily on what to say next that we stop listening to what the person is currently saying.

#### GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS

This is important for in-person communication and virtual communication. There are various types of distractions. Physical distractions can include putting away anything that could pull your focus away. This includes turning your phone on silent, closing your inbox and any browser tabs or programs you have running in the background, and even closing your office door. You also must take into account psychological distractions including; feeling hungry, upset, or physically uncomfortable.

If there are any interruptions you are unable to control or ignore, be upfront about it or excuse yourself for a moment from the conversation to deal with it rather than tuning out. Just make sure they know they're your number one.



## KEEP THE EYE CONTACT

Maintaining eye contact displays confidence and interest. When you look everywhere except towards the person who is talking, you experience a disconnect in the communication. You should try to maintain eye contact for 70% of the time while listening. Try to maintain eye contact for 4-5 seconds then break the eye contact slowly and look side-to-side -- don't look down as this may display that you lack confidence.

Eye contact may not come naturally to everyone so feel free to practice until you become confident. Try focusing on one eye, an eyebrow, or the space between the mouth and the eye. You can also practice with yourself in the mirror!



## STAY FOCUSED

Create a mental picture of what the speaker is saying. This will help you remain focused and if you are listening for a long time it is important to remember and concentrate on key phrases and words. Don't spend all of your time listening or thinking about what you will say next because this will pull your focus. Even if what is being said bores you, fixate on what is being said -- if your mind begins to wander...REFOCUS!

## SUMMARIZE WHAT WAS SAID

I find that taking a few seconds to summarize what was said ensures that I correctly understood. When you say your summary out loud, the other person can correct your understanding and you can add your perspective or ask questions. This can be so important especially when you are communicating with somebody who does not speak the same language as you.

## ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

An important part of listening is being engaged with the speaker. Encourage what the speaker has to say and ensure that you understand what is being communicated. When the speaker has finished, ask relevant questions and be genuinely interested in getting more detail. This is a fantastic way to learn more about the speaker and what the speaker was saying. Follow-up questions show that you are empathetic, that you care, and that you listened to what the speaker has to say.

## BENEFITS OF BEING A GOOD LISTENER:

### 1) YOU WILL BE MORE FOCUSED:

By continuously practicing focusing it will train your brain to focus which is important in many situations in life. If you are working with others or trying to accomplish something yourself.

### 2) YOU WILL BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:

When you are a good listener, you connect with others more easily. By being a good listener, you will show others that you are trustworthy, reliable, and supportive. How would you feel when somebody focuses on what you are saying without distractions and engages with what you have communicated?

### 3) YOU WILL PROCESS INFORMATION BETTER:

You will be practicing focusing which will help you be fully present, be focused on the current moment, and focused on exactly what the speaker is saying.

Learning to be a good listener is a constant process. Being a good listener is beneficial in your personal relationships and professional relationships. Good listening is an invaluable skill that will enhance your focus and strengthen your ability to understand.

LISTEN. PUT THE PHONE DOWN. BE PRESENT. STAY FOCUSED. EYE CONTACT. FOLLOW UP.

# XO

*Yanilette Cant*  
LOUDER founder



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