

# Ten steps to improve listening

## 1. STOP TALKING

You cannot listen if you are talking.

## 2. PUT THE TALKER AT EASE

Help her feel she is free to talk.

## 3. SHOW HIM THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN

Look and act interested. Do not read a magazine or perform other chores while he talks. Listen to understand, rather than to oppose.

## 4. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

Don't doodle, change the radio station or TV channel. It might be quieter if you shut the door and turn the radio and/or TV off.

## 5. EMPATHIZE WITH THE TALKER

Try to put yourself in her place so that you can see her point of view.

## 6. BE PATIENT

Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don't start for the door or walk away.

## 7. HOLD YOUR TEMPER

An angry person takes the wrong meaning from words.

## 8. GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM

This puts people on the defensive, and they may 'clam up' or become angry. Don't argue, even if you win, you lose.

## 9. ASK QUESTIONS

This encourages a talker and shows you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

## 10. STOP TALKING

This is the first and last, because all other guidelines depend on it. You cannot do a good listening job while you are talking.

- Nature gave people two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that they should listen more than they talk.

- Listening requires two ears: one for meaning and one for feeling.

