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Listening

From the Editor

As I was flipping through a book in my favourite local bookstore I came across a Russian proverb, "*Once a word goes out of your mouth you can never swallow it again.*"

To me it made some sense. I know I've been in those situations where I've said something and once it's out of my mouth I wish I could take it back. But you can't take something back once it's been said. Interpersonal communication isn't like a court of law where you can say, "Disregard that last statement." Words make lasting impressions.

I pushed the idea further ...

If I want a critical message to get through to someone, I have to first work out what I want the other person to know, think, or believe. And then figure out what the best words are to get to that end.

I had two reminders ... think then talk and be clear about purpose.

At LIVE Consultants we help people develop skills so that their communication will be purposeful, clear, and well thought-out.

For further information about LIVE Consultants and the work we do with organizations, go to our website: <http://www.liveconsultants.com>.

Marilyn Baetz, editor

About the Author and the Article

We all have habits that we engage in everyday ... the route we drive to work, how we take our coffee or tea, how we brush our teeth ... things we rarely think about, things we just do.

Periodically, bad habits can creep into our lives — having a second dessert, not brushing your teeth before bed, yelling at the driver who just cut you off, thinking about your *things to do* list when someone is talking to you.

When those bad habits rear their ugly heads we often need some guidance in order to change those habits. In this issue, Stephen Baetz shares an alliterative list of listening reminders — tips that will help you make your communication, specifically your listening, more effective in day-to-day interactions.

Stephen is a partner in LIVE Consultants Inc., the organization that sponsors this publication.



Stephen Baetz

Listening Alliteration

It's so easy to fall back to old listening habits, particularly when we're under pressure and it feels like we don't have enough time to do what we know we should. So here is an alliterative list of reminders.

Absolutely accountable, active listeners acquire attitudes that acknowledge annotations and abstractions that are advanced. Among their additional assets are approachability, acceptance, and adaptability. Allowing others to accentuate their accomplishments, they attend to all that is articulated.

Buoyed by beliefs that balanced banter is better when both briskly bounce ideas back and forth, the best listeners build bridges by being brilliantly broad-minded. The benefit being the best bang for their listening buck.

Concerned that callous communication can close candid comment, caring listeners concentrate on challenging caustic comments. They commit to collaboration and cooperation with other characters. Curious about what causes communication collapses, they calmly and compassionately collect commentary and consider consequences.

Daily, dedicated listeners develop a deep and dogged determination to be deliberate in how they demonstrate dependability. They don't daydream, dabble, disconnect, or dance. They diligently dialogue when others desire.

Extraordinary effort is exerted to exhibit empathy. Emotion is not evaded. In every event E-A-R emerges; ever eager, energetic listeners ensure everyone's experience is explicitly expounded. Engrossed, they elicit and evoke expressive explanations that explore the emotive environment.

Fantastic listeners feedback facts and feelings. Fascinated by finding other's frameworks, they are frequently fastidious about following and fathoming so they can facilitate further forthcoming. They are neither frantic nor frenzied nor do they fiddle or fidget.

Great and gracious listeners grunt, groan, giggle, and go for gestures that are

generous and keep the gab going. They don't glare, gawk, or gloss over. Nor do they gossip or gripe. In the give and get, they gradually generate gobs of goodwill.

Helpful listeners are handy at hurdling over harmful hindrances. With heartfelt honesty, they harvest highly helpful hints, never hesitating to hook onto habits which are the hallmarks of healthy humans. They are never hateful or hostile nor do they humiliate, harass, or hamper.

Inviting and involving others, insightful and inquisitive listeners investigate, inquire, and identify issues that are incognito. They are inclined not to interpret the implicit without imploring the interplay of individuals to inform and increase ideas. Neither are they impatient, indifferent, nor ice-cold.

Jabber, jeering, and junk don't jade the judgement of this just listener. They jettison jittery jargon and jealousy. They juggle joviality and jesting with just judgement. They jury ideas that have jelled. They don't jockey or jeopardize; they join jubilantly with others to jaw about the job.

Kaleidoscopes of kindnesses keep this keen listener kindling kinships. The keystone is knowing what you know and knowing what you don't know. Kith and kin know the knack they have for knitting knowledge with know-how. They don't knuckle under, kow-tow, or get their knickers in a knot. In organizational kingdoms, these keeners are kept.

Laudable listeners have learned to leave *their* life legacy alone. They lay aside looking out for self and labour long to learn lessons from others. These are not listless louts who label to disable, nor are they lazy and languishing in lost lagoons of self-lamentations. They leap to new levels in the learning league often leaving lesser lights behind.

Moments of madness have the masterful listeners make minutes to mine for meaning in the messages with meaning-finder questions. They make sense of the many masks and mantles. Mindful not to minimize or manipulate, they mend the material of misconstrued and mistaken messages.

Meticulously, they manage to be mindful of make-believe and they magnify the magic in the mood.

Noble listeners navigate nuances in non-verbals to notice nested needs. Never namby-pamby, they narrow the narrative to neglected nettles nestled in niceties. Neither nonchalant nor nitpicky, they have the nerve to negotiate through the nonsense and nudge nearer to the nuggets. They never neglect nagging and nameless nuisances. These noble listeners are nicely nimble.

Observing opportunities, these open listeners obtain opinions from opposing orientations. Often their original objective is to overcome obscurities and operate openly. Ordinarily they organize their outlook so they can see outcomes. Okay, you're on to something; they're not obstinate, obtuse, offensive, or overbearing.

Probably pushed past positions that possibly paralyze, the positive listeners are particularly pleasant and patient. When patter has a peculiarly pathetic perspective, these positivists prevail and stay perky. They probe to pick out pertinent perceptions and turn them into possibilities, priorities, and plans. They are never preoccupied, pushy, panicky, or perturbed.

Quick-witted listeners carry quality questions in their quivers. Their quest is to quell quarrelsome quandaries by making qualitatively better queries. To quote a quite quirky questioner, "A quantity of qualified open questions can quash quibbling when clarity isn't." Quite so.

Rant at rascals if release is required. But these responsible listeners resist risking refined results. Rephrasing is the reasonable regime. They realize that reflecting what was recounted reconfirms what was related. They reply with rational repartee only after they've rephrased. Revising and reclaiming new ideas is the result.

Synthesizing salvos of saturated sense is the serious search of skilful listeners. Strengthening skills sets the standard for systematic success. Steadfastly they share, sweat, and stretch to sustain and surpass what

they've done in the past. Seek sedentary situations, if you wish. Though skilled listeners scour for significant seeds that will send shoots.

These trusted listeners tackle tough topics. They tailor the Tell-Me-More technique to target the tales untold. They tack around tangents, think through turmoil, and take on trivia. Tenaciously, they track the threads of truths told. They don't threaten or tarry, trash or tattle.

Uncanny listeners unyieldingly use utterances that unlock understanding. They underscore and underline the urgency of sharing so even the unwilling unload. Usually they are unperturbed, even in uncertainty. They don't undermine, underrate, or undervalue nor are they unpleasant and unruly.

Vicious vagaries very often veil vital views. These valiant, vital listeners validate viewpoints. Veraciously, they verify the verbal and vocal to hear the vibes. Venting is very volatile but they vow to never vacillate or vacate. They are not vain nor vulgar.

Wise listeners wade in with well thought-out wisdom using who, what, where, when, and why. They watch and wonder what is meant. With wit, they win. Like wizards, they woo and wake words which are worthy. They don't withdraw, walk-around, or whither.

X-ceptional listeners X-cel at X-cavating and X-amining X-cellent ideas. As you might X-pect, they X-ceed X-pectations in X-changes. They don't X-clude or X-aggerate. For that matter, they don't X-ploit.

Yes, yeoman listeners yield insights when others yak. Yeah, yarns can be yucky yet these listeners never yammer or interrupt. You bet, they don't yell, yawn, or yatter.

Zealous listeners, when life is a zoo, never zigzag. They zero in and zoom right to the zone. They reach the zenith of listening by demonstrating zip and zest. They're not zany and never use zingers.

Now you've got the A-B-Cs. What are you going to do with these?

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