

Although it may occur infrequently, you'll realize if others pay attention to what you say. If people listen closely to what you say undistractedly, you get a particular feeling that is able to form a sense of intimacy no matter who those people are - your best buddies or somebody you bumped into in the lift.

Unfortunately, we live in a time that is dominated by social media and fast communication and as the length of heed we are able to pay dwindles, even more, listening becomes more like an art that is losing its popularity.

However, this should encourage us to make more efforts. Observing the ways in which some most successful listeners do this, and taking into account an array of suggestions will turn you into a finer listener - which will help a pleasing air to form within your circuit and will help you develop as an individual.

## Chapter 1 - Listening is a seldom-seen ability, particularly today.

Listening is not surely charming for us nowadays. On the quite contrary, actually, we are urged to advertise ourselves. We practice oratory, always introduce ourselves to everyone on social media, and surely, we text each other on our phones infinitely.

However, do you remember the last time you actually got the full sense of being listened to by somebody? And when did you actually listen closely to somebody else?

Ironically, although we are more bound to each other communication-wise compared to the past, we undergo at the same time the epidemic of loneliness - as named by some -, as people get older and the youths kill their time more with phones and computers. This makes communication far simpler yet people continue to feel lonely.

To put it in another way, they do not get the heed they are desirous of. It will not be shocking for you to find out that our attention span has lately decreased; however, it will probably surprise you that on average, we now pay attention for eight seconds instead of twelve since as early as 2000, as the analysis of Microsoft shows. According to this information, we are below a goldfish's span of attention, which is nine seconds.

What do we blame for it? Together with other tech devices, our cell phones contribute to this dependence. Indeed, we are surrounded by diversions, including music played in stores and coffee bars.

These all give us a particular reason for which we should concentrate our heed on another person's words. When there is a nice talk going on, no distraction can hinder the conversation. Furthermore, it will be astonishing to learn new things. Every human is fascinating, the writer says -- you only need to pose the accurate questions.

What is the way to achieve it, though? The writer talked with several globally-known best listeners to answer this question.

## Chapter 2 - In the era of Big Data, it is highly likely that listening provides an idiosyncratic deep understanding of what people are longing for.

Jobs for which expertise in listening is crucial ranges from questionings by the military to therapy. The writer of this book works in the field of journalism and has to be aware of how to take out the most engrossing insights from the ones she interviewed with. Yet, it was difficult to even for her to extract such insights when she met Naomi Henderson.

Also called only by her first name among his coworkers in the field, Naomi is already a legendary figure in focus groups. During her time in the profession for more than 50 years, she has worked on many things, ranging from Kentucky Fried Chicken to Bill Clinton's run for the presidency. Clinton was warned only by her to give up talking like Southerner. On the whole, she worked with six thousand focus groups, which amounts to over fifty thousand people.

People are tranquil when they speak to Naomi for some reason. She is tranquil and attentive; she never sits her one leg on the other or her arms in a cross, she appears as if she can spare plenty of time for you. Her facial expressions transmit a message of showing real interest. These features all combined have been the reason why numerous people in focus groups told their insights to her – which makes it clear as to how she has directed many clients to their desired customers.

From the 1940s onward, focus groups have been an important business; however, they have nowadays a competitor by the name of the Big Data: the attention of research has changed from a qualitative one, just as focus groups, to a quantitative one, that is numerical.

Surely, quantitative research has the potential of being highly disclosing; nevertheless, we can only find answers for specific questions. If questions do not stick to the specificity, then it is impossible to answer them as you cannot ask "Why" or "How". Professor of sociology Matthew Salganik from Princeton University has made a comparison utilizing the data prepared for an intoxicated person looking for his keys under a street light since his vision is merely enough to see his part of the sidewalk.

Naomi's method, on the other hand, can be helpful in spotting the keys wherever they are located, a clear spot or a strange place. When she partook in the growth of Swiffer, a cleaning product resembling a mop, it is demonstrated that her method works. After an open-ended talk with people working in the cleaning sector, she found out most of them preferred lightly-used paper towels. This is not even a question one would consider asking

one's interviewees, yet it resulted in the formation of a complete product that imitated paper towels and worked like a one-use cloth.

## Chapter 3 - Interest in people is a requirement for becoming a good listener and avoid uttering unnecessary words, talk only to demonstrate that you comprehend.

Best listeners tend to often be among the people with an innate curiosity. Gary Noesner, a retired intelligence agent who worked for the FBI as their top negotiator for hostages, is the evidence of it.

Whenever Noesner is in a hotel, he makes this unconventional thing every time: he enters the bar of the hotel, picks somebody, and have them speak. His goal is to discover anything he can with regard to them – not as if it is an interrogation, but it is due to Noesner's impossible-to-satisfy innate curiosity. In his conversation with a salesman once, he learned all he knows about tightrope walking from that guy.

In the cases of crisis, this characteristic feature of curiosity got him to speak successfully to terrorists and criminals. Similar to our specialist in focus groups, Naomi, Noesner is also affable right away thanks to how he concentrates his heed on the people he is speaking to. People want to talk to him.

There is also another retired intelligence officer with an innate curiosity who worked in much the same fashion. Soon after the attacks of 9/11, Brian McManus, working at that time as the CIA's lead interrogator, had a nuclear scientist of Pakistani origin confess that he knows Osama bin Laden. What he did was just to hear what the scientist needed to tell. The scientist began to mention Afro-American people in the USA in detail, showing his stunning learnedness in US history. Later, he gave to McManus his story of bin Laden, perceiving McManus like a close friend.

That instance demonstrates another vital fact regarding effectual listening: it is not necessary to talk much. The crucial thing is that you pay full attention to the dialogue. Nodding and rehearsing the things the speaker has said is alone not enough – effectual interpretation is needed.

Let's say you have a friend who got fired. He is going to be distressed; however, what is it that will upset him the most? Maybe financial issues or the question of how to talk about it to his family, everything is possible. Instead of saying "I'm sorry to hear that", you could reply best by paying attention to the cause of his distress and getting him to talk about it. After that, he'll likely open up more about it.

## Chapter 4 - Avoid thinking that what somebody is talking about within your sphere of knowledge – particularly if you are intimate with them.

To whom are you more inclined to talk about yourself? Somebody, you don't know or somebody you are intimate with? Interestingly, most people would rather have a conversation with somebody they don't know.

It is called closeness-communication bias and Judith Coché is a specialist in attempting to tear it down. Her expertise is group therapies for couples: a few couples come together and converse about their relationship at length in prolonged routine seances. When somebody discloses what is distressing them, the entire group hears their words, instead of their spouses alone. And the talk undergoes a substantial transformation when people actually listen to you.

The couples in Coché's sessions make lots of important developments just because they are listened to. If there is anybody who is not paying heed to what their spouse tells them, then the whole group can indicate them. Coché recollects one time when a husband who had been condescendingly explaining things to her wife eventually listened to the words of his wife - which made her cry instantly.

The issue follows from the fact that relationships can gradually get smugger and evoke the wrong idea that how our partners think and feel is within our knowledge. However, yesterday does not reflect today: we change incessantly since what happens around us influences us. Then, how can we follow the course of our husband or wife's change? Easy, always be interested in him or her and never think that it is known to you in advance what he or she will tell you.

Some of us would perhaps rather have conversations with strangers; however, presumptions may cause those conversations to break down. We are unfortunately inclined to typecast people by groupings such as on the basis of their gender, color or nationality, and occupation. Our predetermined opinions regarding what behavior a Texasian will show, for example, influence how we perceive anything they tell. This is a sort of confirmation bias – If what is told does not conform to our beliefs, then we do not listen to it. Nevertheless, people are in fact not so simple creatures.

It is the reason for which the writer warns against classifying oneself depending on the groupings one is part of – do not utter things such as “Speaking as a gay person,” or “As a millennial...” Other people could be in that category and might have contrasting characteristics. Each individual is different than the other and everybody has their own life experiences.

Therefore, avoid being preconceived about what somebody is going to talk to you about. We really have to realize the fact that there may be diverse ideas. Furthermore, we have to be prepared to acknowledge them as valid. This is not simple, as explained in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5 - When the speaker's ideas conflict with yours, it is difficult to listen to it, yet vital.

In 2016, neuroscience research at South California University in Los Angeles made a great finding. A group of people who had politically partisan beliefs was brought together and their brains were examined as their views were contrasted. After their brains were scanned, it appeared as if a bear had been chasing them.

Although it looks odd, hearing contrasting opinions is that hard. Professor Ahmad Hariri from Duke University proposes that since people are nowadays comparatively safer – barely we hear of cases where a bear chases people – the greatest perils we usually confront are social in essence. The amygdala – one of our brain's sections that comes into effect in case of danger – can, hence, overwork even in cases where conflicting views are present.

We need to try to surmount this inclination, however. The poet John Keats invented a redolent expression in 1817: negative capability. To realize things, in one of his letters he said, you have to be able to stay undecided and dubious. This identical capability is known in psychology as cognitive complexity, and any good listener must have plenty of that. Ability to acknowledge there are situations conforming to no category and contradicting opinions without not thinking about them allows you to better know others, and will likewise assist you to make much better and detailed decisions.

Surely, you should not infer from this that you must comply with others' views. Do not even think about grasping their point completely. Actually, there will be things that are to be understood erroneously; they are unavoidable and help a good conversation to be established.

And still, people are frequently loath to interrupt a conversation and just state that they do not understand. It's mostly more straightforward to simply continue and expect that it is not important. However, elucidating a misunderstanding might be an excellent method to get a more solid understanding of another person's mind. Since we cannot assume we read other people's minds, occasionally they'll certainly say things which we won't be able to decipher. This is excellent, though, since it provides us with the opportunity to gain a better insight into them.

Ultimately, each of us has a diverse insight into the world due to the fact that we look through different aspects. It is improbable to read every other people's mind; nevertheless, as long as we are conscious of our own, we'll realize the way through which our individual opinions influence how we explain the opinions of others. Acknowledge it, and you will begin to take contrasting ideas into account and to see misunderstandings as chances to listen more profoundly and mature as an individual.

## Chapter 6 - Asking sound questions is one crucial factor in becoming a good listener.

Throughout a conversation, good listeners won't possibly talk as much as the speaker and instead will listen to the speaker. However, anything the listener utters must be accurately correct.

According to sociologist Charles Derber of Boston College, there are two fundamental sorts of responses in a talk: the support response and the shift response. Let's assume somebody tells you about her dog that escaped and did not return for some days. If your response is about telling that your dog would never run away, then it is called a shift response – You have drawn the focus on yourself. A support response, however, could be to show understanding and later pose a question – such as how she managed to get her dog back – that gets her to narrate her story further at length.

You can possibly guess that shift responses are more prevalent – however, good listeners are those who have mastered support response. The challenge of support responses particularly follows from being certain you do not try to indoctrinate your own ideas cunningly – getting the speaker to talk about her ideas is more favorable.

By the way, avoid fretting about seeming well-informed. Some fret so much about this that the questions they pose indicate they are knowledgeable regarding the response to their question. However, there are questions such as “Don't you think that...” which look like support responses, while they are actually shifted responses that wear camouflages.

Shift responses do not have to mean absolute egocentrism. Listeners might be honestly wishing to give assistance to the speaker. This is one of the grounds explaining why support responses are very difficult to understand accurately – They oblige you to accept that you won't be able to find solutions for others' issues. No one will. Good listeners and sounding boards are alike, in that they can at best get the speaker to achieve the understanding of himself.

A Christian group called The Quakers organizes “clearness committees” dedicated to this sort of attentive listening. In a clearness committee, some participants pose somebody carefully-selected questions to assist them to resolve an issue that somebody living with – that is the implementation of support response in a large group.

Back in the 1970s clearness committee assisted one of its members, Parker Palmer, to determine if he should take an esteemed yet onerous job or not. They inquired him of what would appeal to him in that job – and in a tranquil manner, they asked the same question over and over every time he answered their question talking what he would dislike. When this careful listening session was over, Palmer came to the realization that he wished to get the position because of the reputation it would bring to him.

Palmer then proceeded to found the Center for Courage & Renewal, an NGO whose purpose is to apply clearness committee methods to a more extended public. Giving education to others on how to listen can last for a full cycle of life.

## Chapter 7 - Avoiding taking control of another's story and working to harness your internal speech is what listening to people is.

Being someone whom everyone notices and watches and steering a narrative in a talk appeal to a great many people. A comedy improvising seance of bad quality can be immediate evidence for that, as people race for the spotlight and the most amusing triumph. Actually, however, listening is a crucial requirement for an efficacious improvisation.

Improvising is an excellent technique to understand how to sustain attention. Artistic Director Matt Hovde is in charge of a practice program for novices at the renowned Second City in Chicago. One of the things they do is storytelling. Hovde selects which person in a group tells a fictitious narrative and decides when the storyteller switches. It compels the entire group to pay attention; thus, when it is their turn to pick up where the story is left, anyone can continue the narrative.

There, it is instantly revealed whether you have been paying attention – or when you're excited to tell something ludicrous for a quick laugh and as a result, you spoil the entire story. Business meetings can also be the victim of such inconsiderate things, which explains the reason behind more and more companies' desire to enhance the listening abilities of people working under them.

We do not crave for attention only when we are in groups, however. Even in cases of a dialogue of two, our extremely intense inner voices can lead our thoughts to stray. When we refocus on the speaker, we might not catch what the speaker talks about.

One other issue is even when we maintain our attention to the topic, what the speaker is going to utter next might continuously preoccupy our minds: Making sarcastic retorts are not solely intrinsic to group members in improvising classes. By resisting this inclination, you'll listen more to the speaker's words and understand them– which will make replying more straightforward.

What is even more difficult is to embrace silence. Particularly people in the West try as much hard as they can to abstain from it. In Asian countries, where silence has usually more favorable an approval, American entrepreneurs occasionally wind up being in negative positions during business talks just to evade unpleasant silence. Does such silence need to be unpleasant? Perhaps it means that you're actually pondering about what the person you are speaking to has told.

Even a harder question comes now: can you spend an entire 24 hours without uttering any words? Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer sometimes invites his students to see if they can work this out. By the end, they are inclined to become much more aware of the amazing abundance of sounds all around us.

Silence should not scare you, then – and why not switch your inner voice off sometimes.

## Chapter 8 - Listening is hard work, and sometimes you have to ration it, but it's always worth the effort.

All the onerous things that we have talked about regarding listening do not end here, do not forget: Listening to what others tell you is not alone enough, you have to pay attention to what you tell, too.

A speaker must understand what attracts their listeners. What really appeals to them, and what are the things they are disinterested in? Perhaps you have in your mind a genuinely interesting story to share, however, it'll turn into an arduous effort when your listeners might be distracted and thinking something different or when what is told does not engage their attention.

To interpret auditors efficiently, it is necessary for you to be delicate about implied hints, not only oral replies but also your gestures and mimics. If this does not work either, then ask them whether what you tell them is clear.

Don't anticipate them to constantly pay attention, though. No one is able to listen carefully every time. In the end, it's not an easy task and we must be more aware of the energy it demands. Consider air traffic controllers whose shifts are not long. It may be perilous to make them work longer than two hours as they may lose concentration.

What to do when it is you whose power to listen is exhausted? Gently ask for a pause instead of unenthusiastically listening. Listening is an ability we seldom see; however, people understand whether you listen to what they tell; pretending to listen won't work.

Concentrate on the reason for your lack of power, however. Some people who are not easy to pay attention to you might exist. You should stop for a moment, and think about what is the reason behind it. Are they verbose and tedious for you? Are you at odds with them? Maybe closeness is what frightens you?

No matter what your reasons, contemplate if your reasons give information about them or you.

Perhaps it's ironic, however, if you want to become a good listener and be focused on what somebody is telling, you need to understand your own quite to a good degree admittedly – your prejudices, inclinations, boundaries, and what you genuinely acquire from that talk.

It does not signify that good listening is an egotistical action. On the quite contrary. However, it signifies that good listening is advantageous both for the speaker and the listener.

## You're Not Listening: What You're Missing and Why It Matters by Kate Murphy Book Review

Listening carefully to the world today is hard, and there are not many who can actually do it. Yet, the advantages that listening brings are enormous, no matter what profession you belong to – you can be a moderator for a focus group, or working for the state, a therapist, or just a co-worker or friend. In order to be beneficial both for yourself and the speaker, it is possible to ameliorate your listening skills by not having presuppositions, directing productive encouraging questions, and by acknowledging your innate curiosity.

Listen to those you're most intimate with.

The most suitable way of enhancing your listening skills is very close to you. It's usual to take your partner, or your close family and friends for granted, which causes you to think that you can guess what they'll tell you. Quite frequently, however, this amounts to that we don't genuinely listen to them.

So, when they speak to you in your next encounter, try to implement your listening abilities on them. As you listen to them, also keep your eye on their body language, and notice what they tell and do not tell. You will be surprised.

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