

Pondering Point

Listening is an art form. There is a difference between hearing a person's words and being actively engaged in what they are saying. The term **active listening** implies intent to "listen for meaning".

We often stand in our own way of being able to truly listen for meaning; maybe it is because there are so many other voices going on in our heads. These voices are reminding us to take out the trash, pick up the groceries or check our voicemail. We are distracted by them and not really finding the meaning in what the other person is saying.

Not truly listening to someone can sometimes cost you a lot. It can force people not to want to talk to you. This can cause you to have a damaged reputation, lost business opportunities and unhappy relationships.

Do you know the difference between hearing and LISTENING?

When was the last time you felt like you were saying something important and not being heard?

Are you sure you hear everything that is said to you?

Imagine... hearing more than just the words.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity

Now that we know that there is a difference between hearing and really LISTENING to what someone is saying – let's see if we can tell what it looks like when we are not actively engaged in listening to a person in a conversation.

Try this:

The next time you find yourself listening to someone, try not making eye contact with them for the entire conversation while making mental notes on what has been said.

*Were you able to fully understand everything the person was saying and stay engaged the whole time?
Did your mind wander at all?*

Now let's consider what it looks like to be actively engaged in listening.

Try this:

In another conversation with someone different, face the person who is speaking and maintain eye contact for the entire time.

Did you recall more of the conversation this way? What kind of things do you think you would have missed out on by not watching them speak?

Fun Fact:

The average attention span for adults is only about 7 seconds!



Self Reflection Activity

Who do you consider a great listener?

List the qualities that make that person a good listener.

Try using some of these same qualities the next time you are engaged in conversation with others.

You might just learn something new!