



B: Begin with prayer **L:** Listen **E:** Eat **S:** Serve **S:** Story

I. ASSESSMENT: AM I A GOOD LISTENER?

Read the following questions and give yourself...

4 points if the answer is **ALWAYS**

3 points if the answer is **USUALLY**

2 points if the answer is **RARELY**

1 point if the answer is **NEVER**

- _____ 1. Do I allow the speaker to finish without interrupting?
- _____ 2. Do I listen “between the lines” – that is for subtext (the underlying meaning)?
- _____ 3. Do I actively try to retain important facts?
- _____ 4. When writing a message down, do I listen for and record the key facts and phrases?
- _____ 5. Do I repeat the details of a conversation with someone in order to get everything right?
- _____ 6. Do I avoid getting hostile and/or agitated when I disagree with the speaker?
- _____ 7. Do I tune out distractions when listening?
- _____ 8. Do I make an effort to seem interested in what the other person is saying?

SCORING: 26 or higher: An excellent listener. 22-25: Better than average score. 18-21: Room for improvement. 17 or lower – Get out there and practice your listening skills right away.**

II. WHY IS BEING A GOOD LISTENER SO IMPORTANT?

1. **Being a good listener is one of the greatest skills I can develop to truly connect with people**

An open ear is the only believable sign of an open heart.

David Augsburger

The first duty of love is to listen.

Paul Tillich

2. **The Bible is filled with scriptures encouraging me to be a careful listener**

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

James 1:19 (NLT)

3. **Jesus was a great listener (See Luke 18:35-43)**

4. **Listening has the power to...**

- Show real love
- Build trust
- Improve understanding
- Encourage empathy
- Reduce conflicts

...

III. HOW CAN I BE A BETTER LISTENER?

1. **Realize that listening is not the same as hearing**

Listening is not the act of hearing the words spoken; it is the art of understanding the meaning behind those words.

Simon Sinek

2. Avoid the “communication killers”

- Talking too much
- Distractions
- Interrupting
- Obsessing over details
- Forming responses while they talk
- Being judgmental and critical

3. Don’t be prejudiced by first impressions

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”
John 7:24 (NIV)

4. Focus your attention on the other person

Don’t be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. Care about them as much as you care about yourselves and think the same way that Christ Jesus thought:

Philippians 2:2-5 (CEV)

Keys to active listening:

- Maintain eye contact
- Express empathy with body language
- Don’t interrupt
- Paraphrase to clarify understanding
- Consider your tone of voice

Research has determined that...

7% of communication is verbal—Words

38% of communication is vocal—Tone

55% of communication is visual—Body language

5. Get all the information before responding

What a shame—yes, how stupid!—to decide before knowing the facts!

Proverbs 18:13 (TLB)

6. Ask open-ended questions about them

The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

Proverbs 20:5 (NIV)

Utilize the four “H’s”

- History: “Tell me your story?”
- Heart: “What’s your favorite?”
- Habits: “What are you into?”
- Hurts: “How are you doing with that?”

7. Understand the healing power of listening

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

James 5:16 (NLT)

*Based on the book BLESS: 5 Everyday Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World by Dave Ferguson (Skyhorse Publishing, Kindle Edition)

**Dr. Stephen Ash, “The Career Doctor”, cited in The Michigan Dept. of Social Service No-Name Newsletter, P.O. Box 30037, Lansing, MI 48909