

Communication Skills
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Lecture - 10

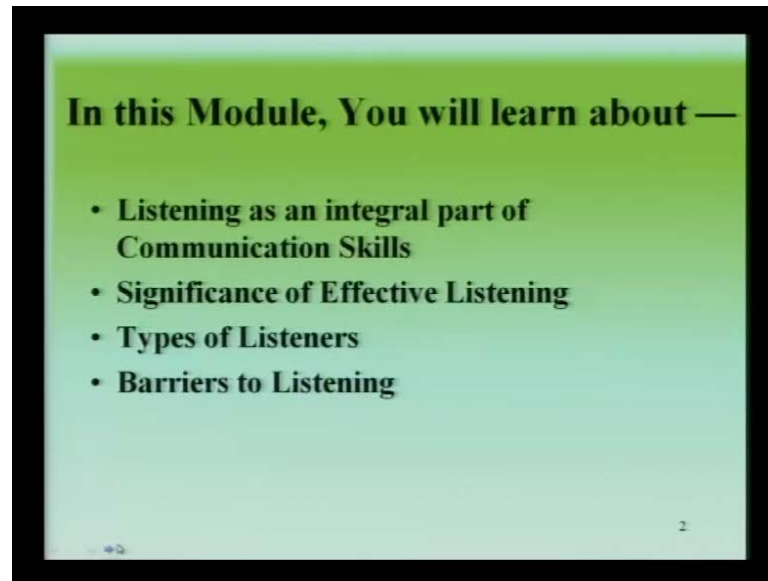
Hello and welcome to NPTEL's course on communication skills. This is module number 4 lecture number 1.

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And this module is on a very important and integral part of communication skills that is listening skills. Now, if you look at the title slide on listening skills I have just put the question, have you heard I am just implying another question, have you heard or have you listened. Now, this is something that you will keep asking and I will answer through various ways when I am talking about listening skills. So, keep thinking have you heard something recently, have you heard a lecture or have you listened to something a lecture or even a discussion.

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So, keep thinking about it, and in this module on listening skills basically you will learn about listening as an integral part of communication skills. So, in the previous lectures already we have spent enough time on communication, the process of communication, barriers to communication and all that having set a background on communication as such. Now we need to know how listening is forming a very integral part of communication skills as such. Once you know why it is so important as an aspect of communication skills then you should also know the significance of effective listening.

At the outset I said I am going to make a difference basic difference between hearing and listening, and then I am also going to make a slight modification with regard to listening. I am just going to tell you that when I am talking about listening actually I am going to talk about effective listening. When I say effective listening I am just trying to make you move from a stage where you are just a mere communicator to becoming a good communicator, and when you are an effective listener you are actually becoming an effective communicator.

So, the significance of effective listening will be discussed with you, and then once you know, understand why it is significant then you will come to know about the types of listeners. You will be surprised to know that there are types, there are attitudes towards listening which determine the types also, and overall what are the barriers to listening, what are the deterrence, what are the stumbling blocks? Even if you want to become an

effective listener what are the blocks, the mental blocks, the emotional blocks, even the physical blocks which actually deter you, prevent you from becoming an effective listener. So, we look at those blocks also and then towards conclusion I will try to give you some overall tips about using listening as an integral part for effective communication.

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Communication

- **Communication and human relationships go hand in hand.**
- **Positive relationships can develop only on the degree and intensity of communication.**
- **The more intense a relationship, the more deep communication develops!**

Now let us begin with communication and then try to relate that with listening. Now first so much show about communication we have discussed in so many modules and lectures before. Now generally what is that that is underlining communication? Communication is basically important for human relationships, and communication and human relations go hand in hand; what does it mean? You cannot have human relationships without communication, and communication is there because human relationships are important. Then if you put it in another way you can also look at it from the aspect of developing positive relationships. Positive relationships can develop only on the degree and intensity of communication. Positive relationships can develop only depending on the degree and intensity of communication; what does it mean?

So, if you meet somebody today and then if you meet somebody after ten years, and there is no kind of communication in between, no e-mail, no fax, no communication using mobile, no letter, etcetera, there is a chance that the communication must have deteriorated during this long lapse of time. There will be some classical exceptions, but

generally in terms of communication principle if you give long gap, out of sight and without communication will also become out of mind. The person is pushed outside the realm of once inner circle of communication.

So, positive relationships can develop only on the degree the level by which you are communicating. So, with some person the level will be quite formal; in the sense it is just only based on official communication. There is hardly any time you talk to the person about the person's family, about the person's hobby, you never went with the person to a movie, you never went with the person for shopping, you never had an interaction with the person in a very lighter wing, you never joked about something before the person, it is very formal level.

Now there is another level which is becoming informal where you do everything that is not formal, and then there is also another level where it is becoming intimate where what you would discuss informally with your friends is slightly moving ahead in this case where the relationship is intimate here you are talking certain things only with this particular person. So, there is a degree, there is a level in which we are communicating with other people.

Now once this aspect is understood you should also know that there is intensity; when I say intimate relationship the intensity level is very high, the relationship also becomes intense and positive. So, positive relationships can develop only if you maintain certain level of communication and go to the inner level as much as possible and then if you are able to maintain the intensity in terms of relationship using communication then the relationship become positive.

Now overall if you look at relationship and communication you understand that the more intense a relationship, if you look at it from the relationships side the more deep communication develops. So, what does it mean? If you have put a kind of wall between you on the other person, if you have created a kind of mental emotional friends, and you are not allowing the other person to enter into your personal realm, the day you decide to remove that friends, probably the day when the other person made a light hearted remark, you also found something funny in the other person and you removed the friends. When you are removing the friends you are also letting the other person in; communication is a two way process. You open up something and something else comes

within and then it nurtures the relationship.

So, the more intense a relationship the more deep communication develops. So, it is a two way process. One you are using communication to develop relationships, the other from the other hand side you also develop a relationship. And then use communication to fortify that relationship, to strengthen that relationship, to make that relationship very, very strong, and that can be done only by using communication. So, communication is a very integral for making relationships.

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Now once you have understood that aspect of communication let us also know some misconceptions about communication. What is the basic miscommunication especially in relation to speaking and listening, many people think that speaking is communication, many people think that speaking is communication; that means speaking is synonymous with communication. If you speak it means you are a good communicator. So, they think that good speaking is good communication. If somebody speaks very fluently they think that he is a fluent communicator, and they also think that the person is able to communicate effectively, thinking that the person is speaking very fast. So, much show many people have the other misconception that talkative people communicate better than calm and silent people.

Many people think that those people who talk more compared to those people who remain calm are the ones who communicate better. They think that people who talk more

communicate better. Now as I said at the beginning these are misconceptions. Speaking is not just communication, there are other skills involved in communication. Good speaking is good communication not 100 percent. Good listening is much more important in certain occasions than just good speaking. Talkative people communicate better than calm and silent people 90 percent know. It is calm and silent people who are better in listening, who observe what others do, who think critically evaluate the other communicator before they response.

Talkative people tend to block their mind, tend to block them emotionally while talking, and they are totally becoming insensitive and careless towards the audience who is responding to them using certain nonverbal behavior which is again ignored by this talkative people. So, overall people have another misconception that they think that to be a good speaker you do not have to be a listener at all, so you just speak. Now this is a basic misconception, because how many times you have come across those people who keep talking and most of us run away from them. Just because that we find them utter bores, they will come, they will talk only about themselves about what they know; what they do not know they will say it is rubbish, they will tend to ignore that, they do not give chance to others and they keep talking.

Now we know that they are very poor communicators, and they are not very popular among us just for the reason because they are not good listeners. So, what I am trying to tell you on all this misconceptions or trying to clear all these misconceptions, speaking is good, a good part of communication, but thinking that only speaking is communication is a misconception, because listening is much more important. And then thinking that somebody who can speak more, who talks more will be able to communicate better is again a wrong thinking because often the person who speaks more need not be an effective communicator. Sometimes he creates technically what we call in communication as noise. He can even cause lot of disturbance in communication by talking more using more than the number of words required than what is actually to be conveyed.

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Some more misconceptions about listening before we actually get to know listening as an integral part of communication as a significant aspect of communication; now generally people think that listening is meant for the ones who are intelligent, only intelligent people can listen, it is something given to intelligent know. The fact is active listening is a cultivated behavior, it is a trained, it is a seasoned behavior. Even a kind of person who is illiterate can be a very active listener, and uneducated person can be a very active listener. It is just a behavior that is cultivated along with the physical activity of hearing. There are more things like interpreting and analyzing which are added to this and has a cultivated behavior one becomes active in listening.

Then there is this misconception that speaking is a more important skill than listening, or generally people think that speaking is more important than listening. Now the fact is both are equally important in effective communication. You can neither do away with one thinking that the other will suffice that is wrong. Then people think that speaking consumes energy but not listening, or rather they think that listening does not consume any energy at all which is wrong. People who have analyzed listening and people who have studied active listeners, they say that when they are actively involved in listening they spend as much energy as a speaker sometimes more than that just equivalent to the energy spent or the kind of physiological changes that is taking place in a jogger is something that active listeners are also expending.

Then again people think that listening is an unconscious process, it is somewhat involuntary. You do not have to pay attention you just listen. Now the fact is listening is an active mental process; what people think is an unconscious process is actually hearing which is an involuntary act, very soon i will make a distinction between hearing and listening. Right now you understand that listening is a very active mental process, it is not an unconscious process. And then they also think that speakers can make their audience listen to them 100 percent. Now the fact is speakers cannot make their audience really listen; that is if the audience do not want to listen to the speaker there is no way the speaker can make the audience listen.

The speaker can introduce some funny elements, use humor, make some shocking element and all that to capture the attention of the audience, but to retain it and to make them listen to his speech continuously he needs a cooperation of the audience also. The audience should be motivated to listen to him; he can of course try to motivate the audience, but the audience should be motivated. The audience should be able to see a purpose in listening to the lecture, the audience should not be distracted, the audience should not be daydreaming, the audience in short should not be having any barriers to listen him.

Now if there are barriers to listening it is absolutely not possible for the speakers to demand listening as part of their speaking skills, it is not possible. It is the audience who control not the speaker especially in terms of listening in regard to communication. Now once again recalling what we have been talking about communication skills in general in the previous lectures I have been highlighting these four aspects of communication skills, the reading skill which is perhaps on the foremost in some cases.

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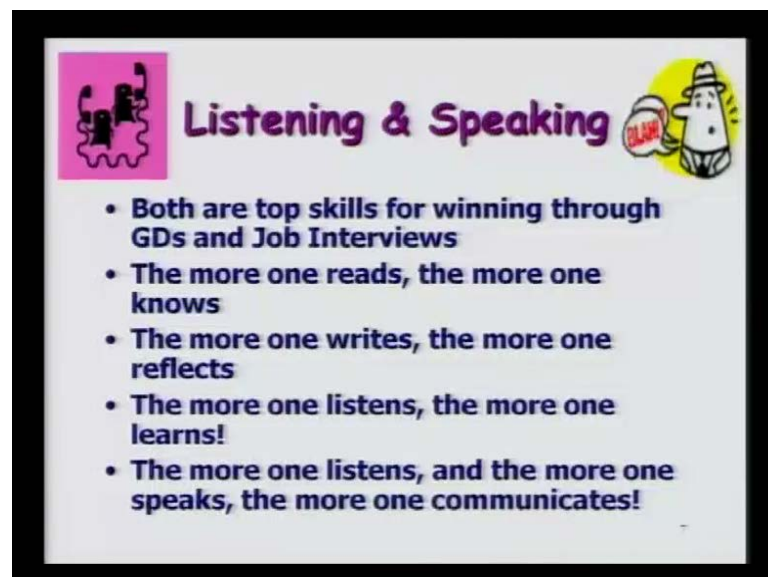
Communication Skills

- Reading
- Listening
- Writing, &
- Speaking

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In some cases the speaking is the foremost, but looking at the stages reading skill, then listening skill, writing skill and speaking skill. Now all are integrated. To think that I will develop only speaking and I will become a good communicator is a very faulty thinking, because without reading, without listening and without writing one, cannot actually become good in speaking.

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Listening & Speaking

- Both are top skills for winning through GDs and Job Interviews
- The more one reads, the more one knows
- The more one writes, the more one reflects
- The more one listens, the more one learns!
- The more one listens, and the more one speaks, the more one communicates!

The slide features a pink square icon with a black silhouette of a person speaking into a microphone on the left. On the right, there is a cartoon character wearing a hat and holding a speech bubble that says 'CLAW'. The title 'Listening & Speaking' is written in a purple, bold font.

If you look at only listening and speaking both listening and speaking are top skills for winning through group discussions, and then for participating in job interviews and

getting the coveted jobs. So, both skills are important. So, if somebody sits in the interview and then when the pane is putting some questions, and if the person is not able to listen to the questions properly and answer the questions, and then giving irrelevant answers; although he may be very good in spoken skills, he may not be selected for the interview, same thing goes in group discussion. If you go through the module on group discussion one aspect of group discussion that I emphasized is about listening being an active listener even when somebody is actually discussing in the group.

Now marks are given even for the person who is listening, who is simply nodding his head, who is just using a nonverbal behavior to show that the person is listening. So, even in group discussion before one responds, active listening is very important. So, both are top skills for wining through GD's, for getting through interviews, and then getting promotion in jobs, even getting some very lucrative offers, these two are very important and top most skills. Now how all these skills are integrated? Reading primarily if you are thinking of enhancing your communication skills I have been telling repeatedly that there is no short cut for knowledge; knowledge is power, information on one's subject matter is not something that one can give it to you through magic that is not possible.

So, the more one reads the more one knows, the more one reads the more one knows and the more one knows of course, the more one is becoming powerful in terms of communication, in terms of knowledge and then the more is one able to write. So, the more one writes the more one reflects, this again reverts back to reading. So, suppose I am writing a chapter on listening I have read something before and then while writing I go back to some of the materials that I read before, because now I just want to ensure whether what I stored in my mind is right or not. So, when I come to writing again I start reflecting, I start thinking over the ideas that I gathered in terms of reading. So, when I read I gathered some information, but it is only when I am writing I am reflecting over those information that I collected, and then when it comes to listening the more one listens the more one learns, it is only when listening using ears using eyes.

So, general misconception listening is something that you do it only with ears, but you also do with eyes, because you also take information and send it to the brain through your eyes taking the nonverbal cues, taking information from the body language. So, the more one listens the more one learns; the more one learns about how a person is thinking, the more one learns about how a person is analyzing, organizing, putting

forward one's viewpoints, how a person is using words, how a person is pronouncing, how a person is performing conducting oneself, what about the body language, what kind of taste the person has in terms of dressing, grooming, what kind of style the person has got.

So, all these things are actually noted by listening. The person learns, it is only when the person listens, and then the more one listens the more one speaks. It becomes a kind of integral process. If you are able to listen more you become a powerful speaker, and when you become a good speaker you also become a good communicator and automatically you start communicating more. So, you can look at how all these skills are integrated and towards contribute to the making of an effective communicator.

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Now overall when we talk about good communication it is all about good listening basically. So, we can as well say good communication is good listening, how do I explain this? One of the major skills in effective communication is the ability to listen well. You remember we talked about various aspects of communication; we basically referred to communication being a two way process where there is a sender and there is a receiver. Now the sender is the one who sends may be if the sender is the speaker using a particular language to transmit a message through his voice using a language using some words.

Now listening is that receiving part of communication. Before the receiver responds he

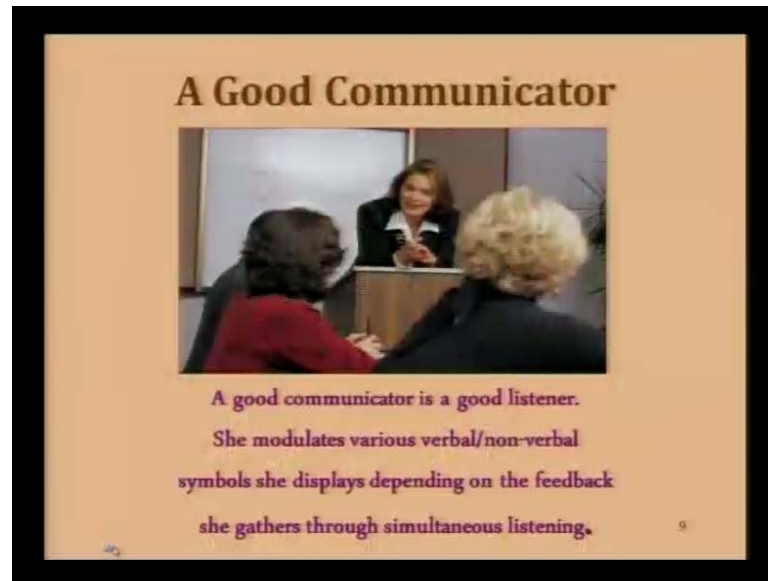
first listens, before the receiver gives his feedback he first listens. So, he is in the receiving part and the receiver listens. It is receiving information through your ears and eyes. As I said just before it is not just receiving information only through ears but also through eyes, both the verbal as well as the visual, both the words as well as the image, both the language as well as the iconic structure or the picture, they are all received through one's listening activity, and then the information is gathered, selected assimilated.

So, good listening is an active integrated communication skill that demands energy and know-how. So, good listening is not as many people think a passive skill, but it is an active integrated communication skill that demands energy and know-how. It is purposeful, powerful and productive. It is purposeful; that means it has a goal, if I listen to this speaker if the speaker happens to be my teacher I will get very good marks in the examination. If i listen to this speaker who is trying to motivate me to do well in interviews I will do well in interview and then I will get a job.

So, there is a purpose. If I listen to this person I will get something out of it, or even for the sake of general knowledge if I listen to this person my knowledge widens; I can record, I can store some useful information which the person is trying to give me in one hour which otherwise I have to sit in libraries for months to get the condensed form of information that this person is giving in a very clear and lucid manner. So, it has a purpose and it is powerful; it is not weak when you are listening actively and it is productive, so most of the writers you will find are good listeners.

Irving Wallace wrote his novel fan club just on an idea that he overheard when he was traveling on a train. There were some fans of an actress who were just fantasizing who were just wondering whether they can kidnap that actress, and the novel germinated in Irving Wallace's mind just when he heard about it. Generally writers, novelists, good speakers, they are all first good listeners; they are very active to the surroundings. They pay attention to what other people are talking, and even if it appears to be totally unrelated people they are just curious to know what people think about life in general, and they want to see how people communicated various level. So, they use their listening skill, and they are very profitably benefited by using it. So, it is productive by listening you are able to produce, you are able to respond, you are able to give feedback sometimes even in the form of writing a novel and making it a best seller.

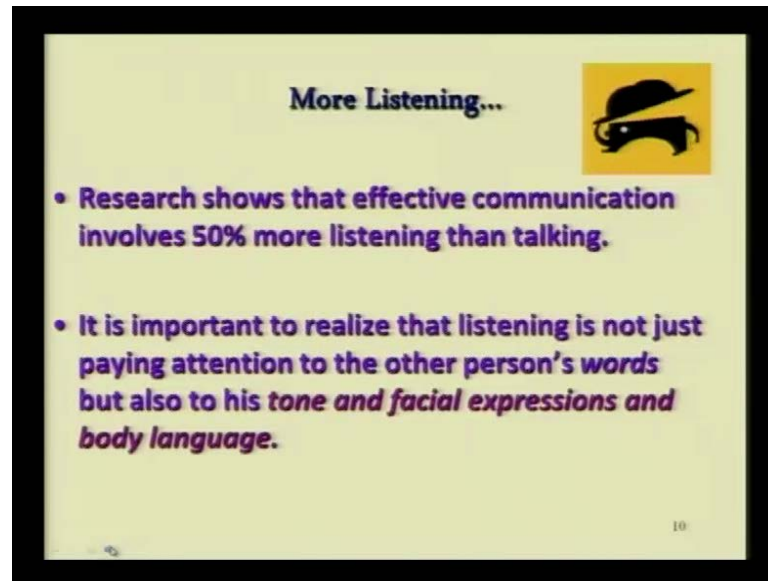
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So, overall when you look at a good communicator, a good communicator is a good listener. She modulates various verbal/nonverbal symbols which she displays depending on the feedback she gathers through simultaneous listening. So, what is happening here? First of all she is modulating, she is regulating the verbal and nonverbal symbols which she is displaying, but this display is done according to what the audiences are showing in response to her communication. So, which means if the audience are with open eyes they are enthusiastic, she is more eager to communicate.

If the audience are distracted she would like to bring back their attention before she communicates; instead of just trying to dominate, instead of trying to speak something and getting over the anxiety of finishing something within this depleted time, the person pauses, wonders why people are getting distracted and does something, use a communicative strategy to get back their attention. So, a good communicator displays these verbal/nonverbal symbols which she modulates also according to the feedback she gathers through simultaneous listening.

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More Listening...

- **Research shows that effective communication involves 50% more listening than talking.**
- **It is important to realize that listening is not just paying attention to the other person's words but also to his *tone and facial expressions and body language.***

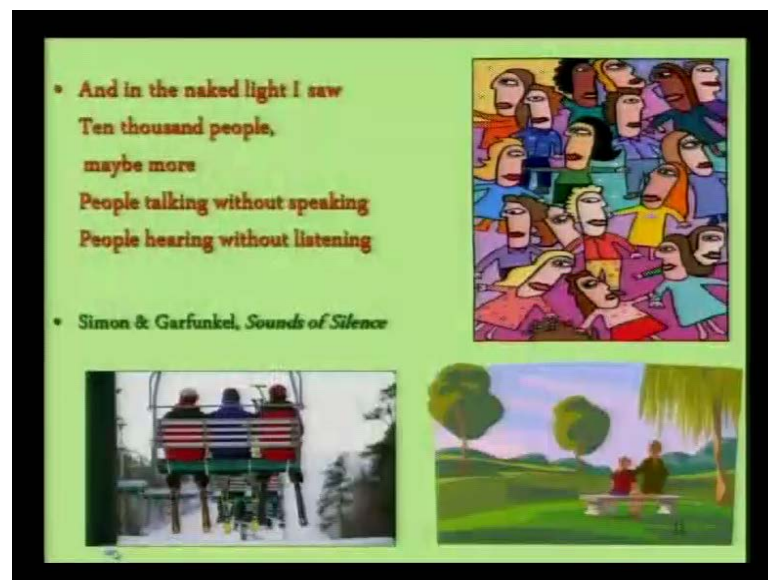
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More on listening, research shows that effective communication involves 50 percent more listening than talking. In fact nonverbalist would go higher than this, but generally they say that about 60 percent is listening and then remaining part involves talking plus other activities. So, it is more on listening and less on talking. Now I should tell an interesting fact here, you will find that people who are patient listeners, attentive listeners are also treated as good communicators even when they speak very less. I have come across interview situations where the candidates go, sit calm, quite and just be a very patient and active listener, listens to whatever the panel tells the person. So, there were cases where even the candidate did not know much about what is happening in terms of the subject knowledge.

So, the panel members put some questions; they asked the candidate, the candidate said I am sorry I am not aware of this. The first part I think it is like this, but the second part I am not aware. So, the panelists were very happy to explain what it is. So, most of the times they asked the question and in the panel there will be always a senior person with a ego who feels flattered when there is somebody who does not know these things very minor things and the person is always eager to explain that to the person who does not know, so most of the time what happens? This person listens 60 percent and 40 percent of the remaining time, 30 percent the panel members spoke, only 10 percent he spoke, but he was selected in the interview. And when the panelists were asked why did you select him, most of them were saying that he is very good in communication.

Now what did they mean? They did not mean that he was talking to us so much, but what they meant was he was able to listen to us unlike most of the other candidates who were not even able to listen to our questions, and they were giving irresponsible answers, irrelevant and stupid answer. So, this person was sensible in listening to us which we treat as a major aspect of good communication, and they selected the candidate also. So, generally it is more about communication and more about listening and less about talking in proportion. Then it is important to realize that listening is not just paying attention to the other person words but also to his tone and facial expressions and body language. So, that is why I said just before that it is not just listening to one person's words by using one ears, but it is also keeping the eyes wide open and receiving all kind of facial expressions and body language cues. So, that is important in terms of communication.

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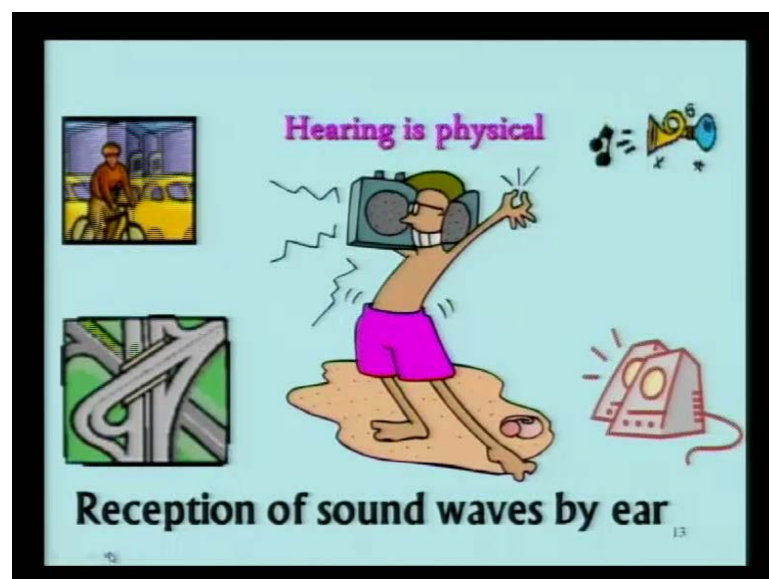
You must have all heard a very popular song by Simon and Garfunkel ‘the famous sounds of silence.’ Now at one point of this song the singers highlight this aspect of communication in a gathered crowded city, in a crowd what happens? City is full of crowd and then what is happening there? So, they sing like this; they say that, ”And in the naked light I saw, ten thousand people may be more, people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening. You see the difference, people talking without speaking; so people are just making empty chats sounds but without making sense without making sensible communication.

People hearing people are receiving sounds without listening, without being an active listener without paying attention to the sounds which are being listened, without arranging them in the mind, without sending useful signals to the brain, they are just hearing without listening. So, people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening is something that should be avoided if you want to become an effective communicator.

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Now another important aspect of listening you should basically understand that listening

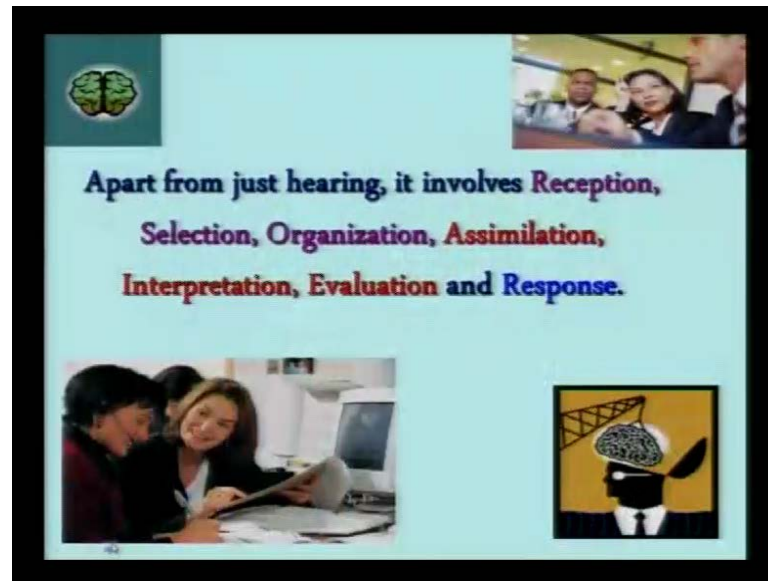
is different from hearing; listening is different from hearing, how is that different? Listening is different from hearing because hearing is physical; hearing is basically a physical activity. You can hear noise, you can be exposed to the noise pollution when you are on a traffic jam, you can hear blaring horns, you can listen to some songs, but basically you start hearing first, you are exposing yourself to the sounds, and when you are just hearing some music without paying attention to the lyrics you are just hearing receiving just the sound. So, hearing is a physical activity. So, it is literally the reception of sound waves by ear, receiving the sound waves by ear that is hearing.

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If you just oppose that with listening, listening is a mental activity. It involves the brain, it uses the brain, the sounds which were received or sent to the brain for assimilation or sent to the brain for storing are stored in the brain for retrieving information at a later stage. It involves concentration; the brain tells this is an important thing just concentrate. So, it is a mental activity. If you listened to good communicator there even when they are keeping quite they are seriously involved, they are not just hearing sounds, but they are also just trying to assimilate the sound patterns, the ideas the message, that is emanating from the sounds.

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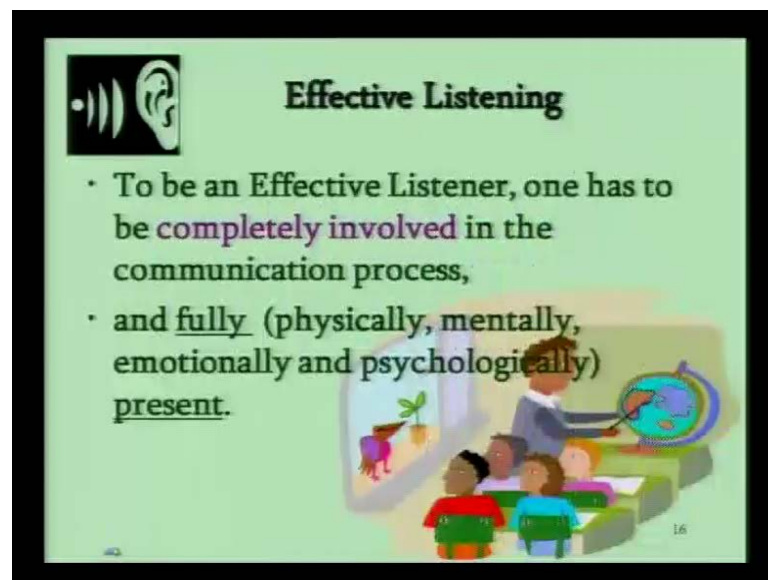
Apart from just hearing it involves reception that is not just physical reception but reception of ideas, selection of ideas. So, there is this selection process in which sometimes a person decides to select what is most relevant and reject what is not relevant at all. So, for instance there are various listening activities in which a person is made to listen to lot of information that is coming on the railway station, but a particular train number is given, and the person is asked to tell the teacher or the trainer when that train is reaching the station. So, so many train announcements and only that particular train comes, the mind of that person becomes active; it receives the information, processes, keeps in mind and then responds back.

So, this is selective listening actually; listening only to that factual information. There is also another type of selection. A story is being told and then the person is asked to tell the gist in a single sentence, what is it about? It is about a cricketer, it is about a blind person just in two three phrases. This is another kind of selective listening but involving the gist. It also involves organization, organizing of the ideas, assimilation, assimilating the ideas again, then interpreting, critically thinking and analyzing, then evaluating whether its good or bad, whether it is useful or not, can I give more to credit or not and then responding to this, okay.

Now once we have discussed this much about listening and then trying to identify the difference between hearing and listening and then understanding listening is a very

active process involving interpretation, evaluation and response; lets slowly get to know what are the barriers that would affect listening, what are the types of listening? So, this we will do in the coming slides. So, once you understand and accept the fact that listening is a very integral part of communication what makes one an effective listener?

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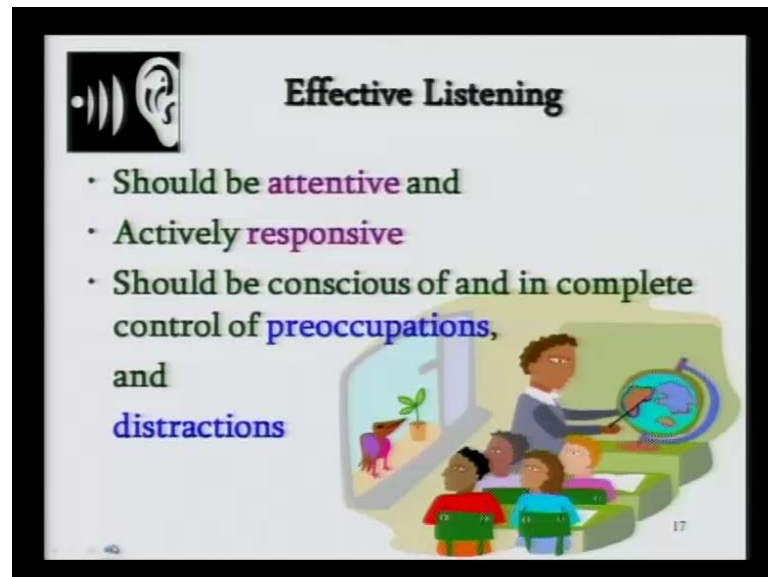


Let us look at the aspects that will make one an effective listener, effective listening as an integral part of communication skills. To be an effective listener one has to be completely involved in the communication process. So, there is no partial involvement in the communication process if one wants to become an effective listener. It should be completely involved and fully present; when I say fully I mean physically, mentally, emotionally and psychologically present. A person may be mentally present but then emotionally feeling something else. A person may be physically present sitting there before the teacher but mentally absent.

So, most of the times this happens in classroom situations; the teacher is telling something, but the student is mentally away from the class. Probably the student has to go home for vacation, and the student is already thinking ahead of the celebration that will take place at home, the close friends that he might be visiting and so on. So, mentally the person is off, but physically the person is present. Psychologically the teacher has said already that after this I am going to ask you some questions. So, there is a weak student and then already he is afraid of just going to the stage and answering the

questions; he is already psychologically intimidated by certain things. So, psychologically the person is off. So, when I say that one should be present one should be physically, mentally, emotionally and psychologically present in all sense in the complete sense.

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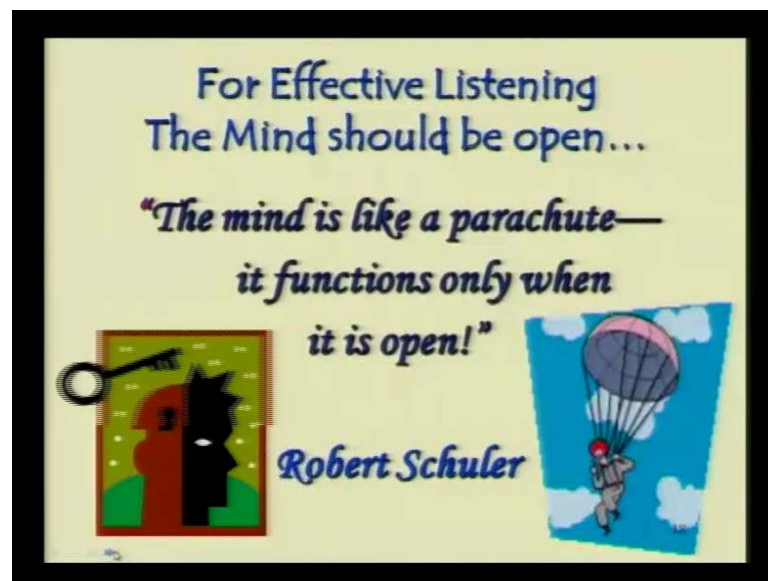


In Effective listening one should be attentive all the time and not just being attentive but actively responsive. One should be able to give feedback not necessarily by stopping the lecture or the speaker interfering the speaker but through nonverbal body language gestures, by using facial expressions, by appreciating an idea by nodding ones head, even a gentle smile showing that I very much like the concept or seriously taking notes, focusing the eyes, maintaining the eye contact. So, all these will indicate even without saying a word that you are actively and attentively involved in this listening process.

Now the effective listener should be conscious of and in complete control of preoccupations. So, there will be so many things occupying one's mind. So one's vehicle has very less petrol and while coming the person heard that there is going to be strike for the next two three days. Now the petrol bunk is likely to close at 1 o'clock, and the teacher is still saying something seriously at 12.50, the class should be over by 12.55, you have just three, four minutes to go to the bunk, but already the teacher is expanding the lecture. So, what happens to the mind is already the person is preoccupied with this thought; the mind will not pay attention.

So, one has to throw all these preoccupations before becoming an effective listener, or at least one should try to control that, tell the mind whatever happens let it happen but let me focus on the lecture now and control the distractions. People get distracted for very small things; especially in class room when somebody is passing by immediately all the students turned their attention towards that side. A bird chapping, some noise, so everybody would like to know what is happening. So, getting distracted even for very minor things should be again avoided.

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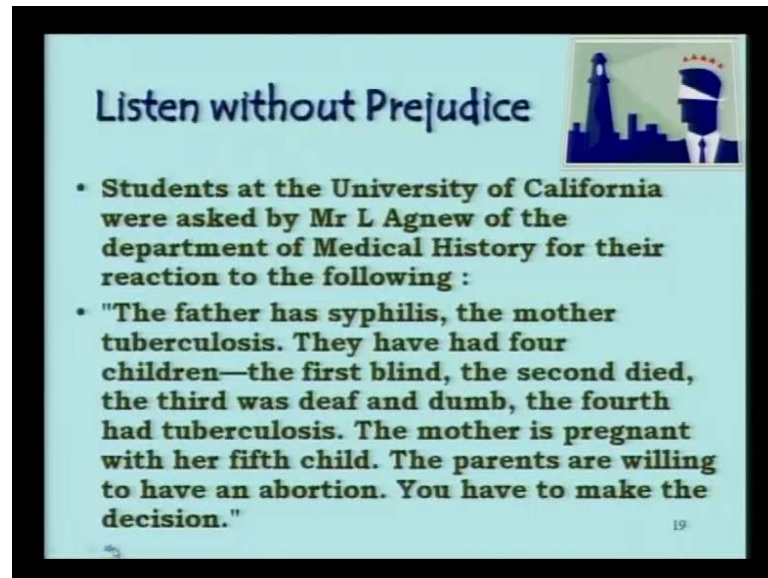


For effective listening the mind should be open, what do I mean by this? As Robert Schuler said in one of books, "The mind is like a parachute, it functions only when it is open." So, the mind is like a parachute it functions only when it is open. You see the analogy. The parachute if it does not open it can cause the death of the person who is depending on the parachute when he is jumping on the air thinking that the parachute will open.

Now only when the parachute opens it fulfills its function. Robert Schuler says that the mind is just similar to that; only when it is open it will be able to receive ideas, receive concepts, it will be able to assimilate, interpret, critically think. If the mind is closed it does not function at all. The person has become rigid, the person has become strong in his own introverted thinking, the person is not responding properly, the person is having some psychological inhibitions, the person is acting as a major communication barrier.

So, the mind is functioning like a parachute; it functions only when it is open. To keep the mind open the eyes and ears should also be open. When the eyes and ears are opened one is listening and one should be activity listening once you keep all these organs open.

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Listen without Prejudice

- **Students at the University of California were asked by Mr L Agnew of the department of Medical History for their reaction to the following :**
- **"The father has syphilis, the mother tuberculosis. They have had four children—the first blind, the second died, the third was deaf and dumb, the fourth had tuberculosis. The mother is pregnant with her fifth child. The parents are willing to have an abortion. You have to make the decision."**

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The next point I would emphasize is that one should listen once the mind is open without prejudice, what is prejudice? Prejudice is forming an opinion in one's mind even before actually confronting the situation, prejudice its judgment before. So, before meeting a person, before interacting with a person, one forms an opinion the person is very bad or even just by looking at the person the way the person has dressed, the pleasing manners that the person has got, immediately the other person jumps into the conclusion that the person is very good; just by looks, just by appearance deciding, even before actually experiencing what is there in the person.

So, that is prejudice; forming a negative opinion mostly even without actually coming to terms with the person or an idea and thinking that it is wrong. Now if you want to become an effective listener you should do away with all these prejudices. So, you should listen without prejudice. To illustrate this mostly in all communication skills course this is an off quoted story that is being told repeatedly; it is worth telling here also. So, let me illustrate this example, and then you will understand how even elite people, intellectual people could be prejudiced. Look at the example. The students at the University of California were asked by Mr. L Agnew of the department of Medical

History for their reaction to the following.

So, the students at the University of California were asked by a person in charge of medical history for their reaction to the following. So, now the person is going to make a statement about a particular persona, and then they are asked to respond to that. So, this is what Mr. L Agnew said before the students. He said the father has syphilis, the mother tuberculosis. So, you can easily understand both are deadly dangerous diseases fatal diseases, and those days when he is narrating they did not even have cure for these kinds of diseases. They have had four children, the first blind. So, four children already a bigger family than a family that would have just two children or one and to make them matter worse, the first blind, the second died, the third was deaf and dumb, the fourth had tuberculosis.

So, you can understand none of the children they had were physically fit. They were not having all the mental acumen that a normal healthy child would have, so they had some problem or other. Now the mother is pregnant with her fifth child. So, all the four children they are not fit physically not that healthy; the mother is pregnant with her fifth child and the parents are already not well, they have fatal diseases. The parents are willing to have an abortion; because of all these conditions the parents are willing to have an abortion. Now you are at the other end, may be you are the doctor, you are the deciding authority, and you have to make the decision; they say yes. Now if you say yes, the child will be aborted.


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Listen without Prejudice

- **Most of the students voted in favour of abortion.**
- **Mr Agnew's comment to them:**

**"Congratulations!
You have just murdered Beethoven!"**

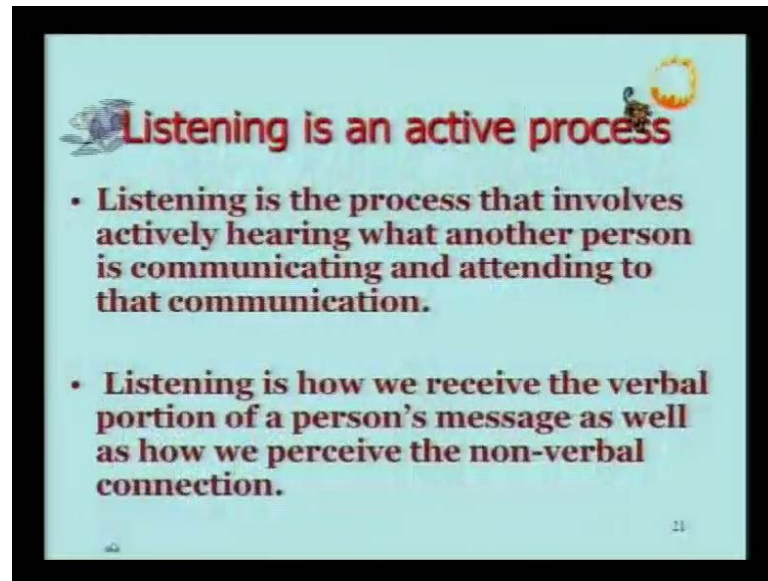
**The deaf musical composer and a child prodigy
who gave his first public performance as a
pianist when he was eight years old!**



Now as you could expect and as most of you would answer immediately impulsively most of the students voted in favor of abortion; they said, yes, we should abort the child, because already they are in a fatal kind of situation; their life is in danger. The four children they had medically do not have a healthy trend; they have some kind of disability. So chronologically, historically, hereditary wise, it is expected that the next child will also not be so healthy. So, there is no harm in aborting, and there is meager chance that the child will be able to grow well, because the people are already poor; they are also suffering from their own illness. So, that was the thinking and most of the students voted in favor of abortion. Now Mr. Agnew's comment to them was this, he said, "Congratulations! You have just murdered Beethoven!" Congratulations, you have just murdered Beethoven. So, that child that fifth child was Beethoven.

So, for those people who do not know about Beethoven, he was the deaf musical composer; of course, he was born deaf, but he was a child prodigy. He became a genius who gave his first public performance as a pianist when he was just 8 years old. So, if he had gone for abortion with that prejudiced thinking you would have actually killed Beethoven, the kind of musical genius that the world has ever seen and may never see such a genius at all. So, think about this. When you are prejudiced actually your mind is closed, and it does not think critically, it does not think healthy.

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That is why it is said that, avoid this prejudice, and then keep the mind open, and understand that listening is an active process. Many people think that listening is a passive process. They think that you can just switch off your mental energy, you can just shut your brain and then still listen; it is not like that. Listening is an active process. Why do I say this? Listening is the process that involves actively hearing what another person is communicating and attending to that communication. So, if the person is not actively hearing whether on a face-to-face situation or on a phone, what will happen is it will result in miscommunication. So, the wife told the husband to buy something from the market while returning.

The husband said, yes, but he was not actively listening. He thought that it is just a very routine thing that the wife is telling him. While returning as expected the husband did not buy what the wife wanted him to buy from the market, not an active listening process, but it result in miscommunication to the fact to the effect that the wife thinks he is not caring towards whatever I am telling; he is not interested in helping me; he is not interested in supporting me; he is an insensitive person, whereas the husband was so busy going back to his office, and there was a proposal that is not yet ready in his PowerPoint, he has to make some more additions, and the boss asked him to submit it at 10 o'clock, and he is just rushing there at 9.30, do that additional corrections and then submit it before the boss.

Now there was already a kind of preoccupying thought in the husband's mind. So, he did not pay attention to the wife's talk that was conveyed with the message that he should buy something when he is coming back home. So, you can understand even a small family situation, misunderstanding can happen if listening is not used as an active process. Listening is how we receive the verbal portion of the person's message as well as how we perceive the nonverbal connection. Now I will also say this about this aspect of communication which is an integral part in body language nonverbal communication where one has to be all eyes as well as all ears in terms of effective listening. Imagine a situation in an Indian home where the host has brought some guests, and then the guest are suppose to eat sumptuously in an Indian background, but at the same time the guest are shy, hesitant; it is the responsibility of the host to culturally push, encourage the guest to eat more have more food.

So, if there is cultural misperception in terms of listening here, if the guest is saying, okay that is enough, you are giving me more. So, that is enough, but then actually the eyes are again reverted to the food. Hands are indicting keep more, keep more rice, but then eyes are also showing that I am eagerly awaiting more rice, but verbally the person is saying enough, enough. Now if the host thinks that or takes the verbal message seriously the host will not give more rice; the guest will be offended. So, the host actually pays attention to both the nonverbal as well as the verbal and then gives more rice even more than what the guest is expecting. So, this is where the effective communicator is able to perceive the nonverbal connection with the verbal connection and link it in his mind and then respond accordingly.

Now with this spot I would like to conclude this lecture, and in the next lecture I will talk about the types of listeners; I will talk about various attitudes which are contributing to barriers to listening and barriers to communication, because barriers to listening actually leads to barriers to communication, and how to become an effective listener. I will give some more tips, and then conclude by saying how by becoming an effective listener we will also become an effective communicator. So, thank you so much. We will continue in the next lecture on this module on listening skills.

Thank you.