

Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture – 19
Communication: Significance of Listening

Hello everyone. Welcome back to this course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I hope you have been enjoying this course for the past three weeks. We are in the fourth week of this course and this week I am going to talk about Communication Skills, and then particular four important skills which are associated with that. In fact, people have a misconception that communication skills and soft skills are just one and the same, but you should understand that communication skills are actually a major integral part of soft skills or you can look at it as communication skills plus or the missing part of communication skills which we generally overlook so that amounts also to soft skills.

But soft skills are a larger set and then the subset that which is much important is also what we call as communications skills. But before I start let us take a quick relook at what we did in the last lecture. The last lecture I just concluded by highlighting how you can break bad habits and form good habits. The last entire week was about habits and I hope you been paying attention to your bad habits, trying to remove them, and trying to replace that with good habits. I suggested that if you want to break bad habits you can stop the way you started it.

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Highlights

Breaking Bad Habits
Stop the way you started it—in tiny bits.
Reduce the frequency; increase the gap.
Replacing a bad habit with a good habit

Developing Good Habits
Practice good habits that will free your brain and mind such as:

1. Not leaving any task uncompleted.
2. Unfinished task will hang heavy in your brain causing you less space for focussing and concentrating on new activities.
3. Avoid becoming serial-addicts.

Good Habits and Success are inseparable
Good habits make you indispensable and irreplaceable
Some habits of highly successful people worth inculcating in you:

1. Be extremely hard working
2. Do the extra work with a smile, even if you don't get paid.
3. Never look at your watch and work.

Work till you complete, so that your mind stays calm and you can sleep peacefully each night.

5. Focus on the most important goal.
6. Never spend more time on something that can be completely avoided!
7. Concentrate 100%, you will finish it faster than the rest!

Highlights of the Last Lecture

So, how do you stop breaking bad habits? Just think about the way you started it and then you break it. How did you start? You started in small quantities, you started in tiny bits. So, you try to reduce a frequency the number of times that you are using a bad habit and then try to increase the gap. So I was giving the example of smoking a cigarette, if you are addicted to smoking that as a chain smoker. So, reduce the quantity and then increase the gap that is like instead of everyday make it alternate days and then after 2 days, 3 days, 5 days, weeks gap and so on.

The other thing I highlighted was you should try to replace a bad habit with a good habit and how to develop good habits. So, practicing good habits will actually free your brain and mind and suggest not living any task uncompleted. In this context I talk to you about this Zeigarnik effect, where if you leave something uncompleted the thoughts will come and hunt you. So, unfinished task will hang heavy in your brain causing you less space for focusing and concentrate a new activities.

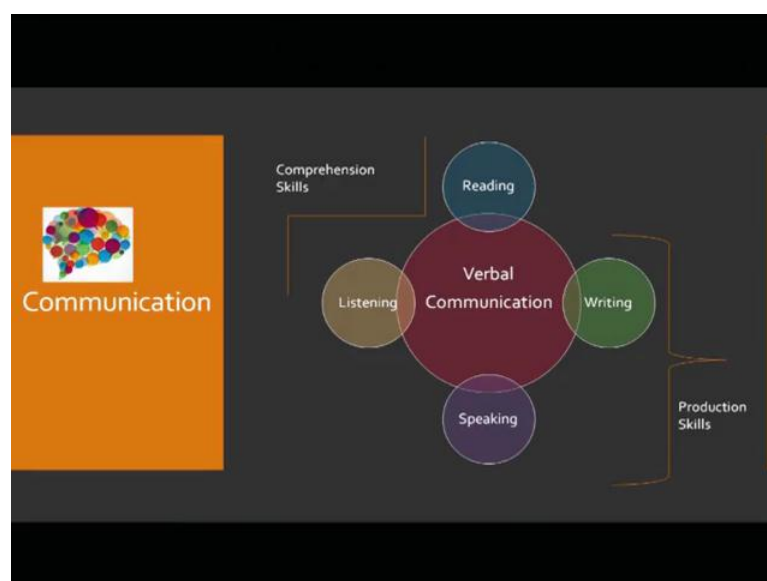
The other important thing I pointed out with regard to good habit is; first avoid becoming serial habits whether you are reading something serially or whether you are actually watching something serially which is much more dangerous especially the television serials which will kill you in terms of your time and in terms of your focus ability,

because they are going to hang heavily in your brain; thanks to what we discussed about Zeigarnik effect and they are not going to leave you till you go to the completion maybe takes 2 years 3 year three years then its stays there.

Now the other important point I talked about in the last lecture is that good habits and success are inseparable. In order to cultivate habits of success I said that you first need to practice lot of good habits. Now it is good habits that will make you indispensable and irreplaceable in any job. Some habits of highly successful people worth in cultivating in you for example, we extremely hardworking do the extra work with the simile even if you do not get paid, never look at your watch and work, and then work kill you complete it and then your mind stays calm and you can sleep very peacefully that night.

Focus on the most important goal, never spend more time and something that can be completely avoided there is no point doing useless work very perfectly meticulously. Last but not the least I said that when you do your work concentrate hundred percent. The power of concentration is such that you will be able to finish any task much faster than the rest of the people. Now with this I hope that you are able to cultivate some new habits good habits. Now the other important part of soft skills which is as I said which is considered in terms of communication skills.

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Let us look at what is communication and what are the various skills involved in it. The movement we talk about communication basically we think about verbal communication, that we use words, either while speaking or writing use this. I will be specially spending some more lectures on nonverbal communication where you use images, pictures, gestures to communicate. Currently let us focus on verbal communication.

So, when we talk about verbal communication there are four associated skills in terms of verbal communication that is reading, writing, speaking and listening. In fact, it should be starting with listening and then reading or writing and last but not the least that is speaking. We generally think that we start with speaking, but that is not correct we actually start with listening. It is believe that even the child that is in the womb of the mother start first by listening before we comes out then slowly start speaking. So, the listening is the first and foremost skill that we try to invite in terms of developing our communication skills.

If you look at it listening reading writing speaking also they look to be different skills they are all integrated of which we can look at listening and reading particularly as comprehension skills. Why do we see them as comprehension skills because most of the times when we try to listen to somebody or we read something we try to understand, we try to garbs, we try to in cultivate certain things from others, we try to perceive, we are actually receiving, we are receiving the input from others. Listening, we are listening from others reading we are reading from somebody who has experienced life and then sharing his or her thoughts and then we are reading about it. So, both sides they are comprehension we are trying to understand.

Now, the other side writing as well as speaking they are considered as production skills. Now why they are considered production skills? Because we are actually trying to produce; if you look at speaking in terms of using our voice so we have trying to produce some sounds literally, but we are also trying to produce we are trying to produce ideas we are (Refer Time: 07:44) to give way we are trying to use words to our thoughts and then we are trying to influence people. So, in that sense we are trying to create something.

The same we do with writing also. So, you know that writing is suppose to be the most influential of all these skills, people have written sometime single caption one maxing one sentence which is change the world, novels that are change the world, essays that are become very inspirational and thought provoking and then as changed so many people. Now these are reasons while speaking and writing are considered as production skills now let us look at the aspect of listening and keep it in mind as I said communication skills or integrated; let me explain how.

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Communication Skills are Integrated

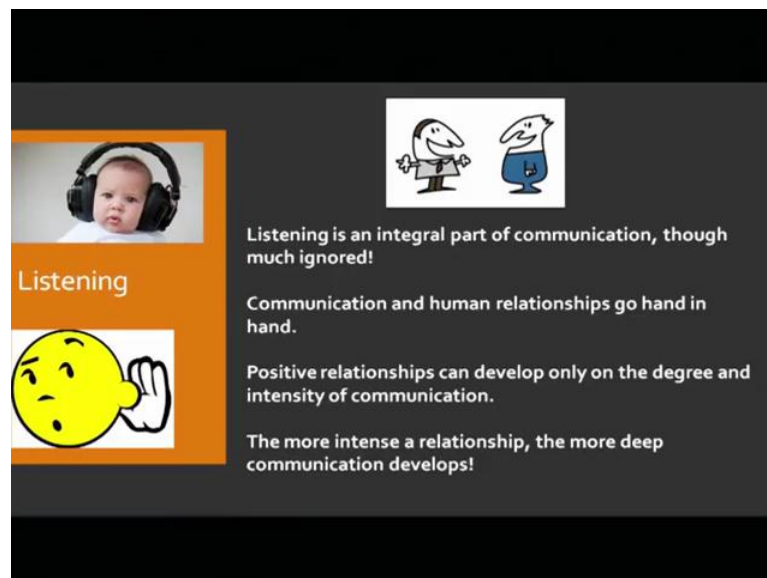
- Both listening and speaking are top skills for winning through GDs and Job Interviews.
- The more one reads, the more one knows
- The more one writes, the more one reflects
- The more one listens, the more one learns!
- The more one listens, and the more one speaks, the more one communicates!
- The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

If you look at listening and speaking, both listening and speaking are considered skills for winning through group discussions and job interviews. That is if we look at it from a professional point of view, but listening and speaking or top most skills again which are required in developing inter personal skills also. In order to maintain good relationships, again you have to be good listener and effective speaker. Now look at the way communication is integrated with each other. The more one reads the more one knows. It is only by reading you come to know of the world even before you actually experience it. So, the more you read you actually gather from experience of other people and the more you know.

The more one writes the more one reflects. So, the more you write about yourself in a diary, about your thoughts in the form of an essay, about a project in the form of a report, about your thesis in the form of a report or a dissertation, about your inner most feelings in the form of a poem, about your own experience in the form of a novel or even a very brief experience in the form of an interesting short story. So, more one writes the more one reflects and writing is a process of self discovery; you actually discover. Every time you write something not necessarily about you, but then even when you are involved in the process of writing you know about you. And then if you remember I was telling at the beginning of this entire sequence of lectures knowing yourself is the first important quality which will give self awareness. So, writing is helpful in creating that kind of self awareness.

And then the more one listens the more one learns, it is through listening you learn from others. The more one listens, the more one speaks, the more one communicates and the more one communicates the more successful one can become.

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The slide features a dark grey background with an orange vertical bar on the left. At the top of the orange bar is a photo of a baby wearing large black headphones. Below the photo, the word "Listening" is written in white. Further down is a yellow cartoon character with a sad expression and a hand to its ear. To the right of the orange bar, there are two cartoon characters in a white box, followed by four lines of white text.

Listening

Listening is an integral part of communication, though much ignored!

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!

Look at listening as such; I am trying to make you understand that listening is an integral part of communication though it is much ignored. People generally think that in order to become an effective communicator it is enough that if you speak and then you write

something. And most of the times they miss listening because people think it is a kind of passive form of communication. Listening as well as, even sometimes people think reading. They think that these are passive form communication and then more importantly they think that it is when they try express their ideas in the form of speaking they think that it is becoming active.

Now listening I want you to understand that is an integral part of communication though it is much ignored because, only with listening you will be able to develop good human relationships. And communication itself by and large goes hand in hand with human relationships. So positive relationships can develop only on the degree and intensity of communication, the more intense a relationship the more deep communication develop. Let us look at some misconceptions about communication.

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Misconceptions About Communication

- **Speaking is Communication**
- Good Speaking is Good Communication**
- Talkative people communicate better than calm and silent people**
- To be a good speaker, you don't have to be a listener**

What are the misconceptions about communication? First people think that speaking alone is communication. They think that if somebody speaking well they think that he or she is a good communicator, and combined with that they think that good speaking is good communication. That is speaking nicely speaking sweetly they think it is good communication. There are other who has miscommunication that talkative people

communicate better than clam and silent people which again is a gross miscommunication because very good negotiations it is the silent person actually did not.

And it is an ability to remain calm and silent when the other person is more talkative and wait for the other person to finish and then communicate effective. This is a misconception thinking that talkative people communicate better than common silent people. And then people think that to be a good speaker you do not have to be a listener at all. So, it is enough of that you practice speaking, you develop your vocabulary you develop your language skills, but they think that you do not have to be a listener. But as I am trying to imply without listening you cannot become a good speaker.

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Misconceptions About Listening

- *Only intelligent people can listen.*
• **Fact:** Active listening is a cultivated behavior.
- *Speaking is a more important than listening.*
• **Fact:** Both are equally important in effective communication.
- *Speaking consumes energy, not listening.*
• **Fact:** Active listeners spend as much energy as a speaker/jogger.
- *Listening is an unconscious process.*
• **Fact:** Listening is an active mental process; hearing is an involuntary act.
- *Speakers can make their audience listen to them 100 per cent.*
• **Fact:** Speakers cannot make their audience really listen.



You should also understand some misconceptions about listening. People think that only intelligent people can listen. So, people who are not that educated they think that they cannot listen at all, which is not correct because active listening is a cultivated behavior. You can actually develop skills in terms of listening and then become an effective listener. The other misconception people have about listening is that they compare speaking with listening and then they think that speaking is more important activity than listening. Now the actual fact is both speaking as well as listening are equally important in effective communication. Then the other misconception is that speaking consumes

energy not listening. This is another very gross misconception that when you speak you consume more energy, but not when listening. But active listeners send as much energy as a speaker or jogger.

Research has been done in many foreign universities and then they try to find out how much energy is consumed by an active listener. So, I will talk about maybe in the next lecture also about active listener, but right I am understand that active listener is a very effective listener and who uses his brain and then complete thinking to the optimum when he or she is involved in the listening process. Now active listeners spend as much as energy as the speaker or they say that even like a jogger, so0 they are compared with a jogger and an active listener they found that they are able to spend the energy more or less in the same manner.

The other misconception is that listening is an unconscious process, but the fact is listening is an active mental process. Hearing is rather and involuntary act. So, I will discuss about these two in the coming slide or so. Speakers can make their audience listen to them hundred percent; this is another gross misconception because speakers cannot make the audience really listen unless the audience themselves want to listen to the speaker.

So, you cannot force the people to listen to you, however good you may be in your communication skills unless they really want to pay attention, unless they thing that there is something important in what you are saying, so you cannot make them listen on their own. Maybe you have to create interest and all that that is different thing, but you cannot make them actually make them listen.

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The slide is titled "Listening Versus Hearing" and is divided into two main sections. The left section, on an orange background, features a cartoon character with a hand to his ear and a man speaking into a megaphone. The right section, on a dark grey background, contains two columns of bullet points. A small graphic of a brain with sound waves is in the bottom right corner.

Listening Versus Hearing

- Hearing is a Physical activity
- (horn sound, fan sound, birds chirping, etc)
- Involves just hearing

- Listening is a mental activity
- Apart from just hearing, it involves Reception, Selection, Organization, Assimilation, Interpretation, Evaluation and Response.

What about hearing, is it the same as listening? Again many people think that listening and hearing are one and the same. Now it is wrong perception because hearing is very different from listening. Hearing, if you look at it is basically a physical activity, whereas listening is a mental activity. Hearing for example, sounds falling into your ears touching your ear drums. So, causing some kind of sound sensitivity that is all. So, when you are on traffic you listen to horn sound, when you are even sleeping you are able to hear the fan sound you hear the fan sound and then you continue to sleep. You also hear the sound that is made by the birds the chirping of the bird, but then still you are able to do something else.

So, all this hearing most of the times is not going to affect any other activity that you might be doing like driving your car or sleeping. So, it is not going to be effective that much, you can just let your brain do whatever it wants even when these sounds are just falling into your ears. But this side it is not just involving hearing, but it is involving hearing plus more than hearing. And more than hearing it is involving reception, so the reception of ideas the reception of the nonverbal cues which are coming. Selection, so there is a filtering that is happening I am receiving all the ideas you are giving, but I am deciding I am thinking that this is important and then I note down some ideas, so I am also selecting I am not listening to everything.

For example, if I am in the railway station and then if I am listening to all the announcements which are made, I hear most of them but I listen to that one information that is about my train that is going to leave from that particular platform at that particular point of time, so I also select. Then after selecting I organize. So, that is particularly with regard to students when you attend class lectures or anybody who is attending general lectures, you try to receive the information and then after that you select what is important and then you organize.

Then you simulate, so you connect to hear the ideas that you organize. And then you interpret you just try to interpret and then try to get meaning not only that you try to evaluate, you try to see whether the person is really making sense, really telling you the truth or really giving you some real influential ideas or it is not so. And then you may also respond, if you are in lecture you are not sure of certain things you can ask clarification, you are still sure of certain things but you want to know whether it is going in this direction the way you have thought of it in your mind. So, then again you try to respond. So many of these mental activities are involved when you are actually listening.

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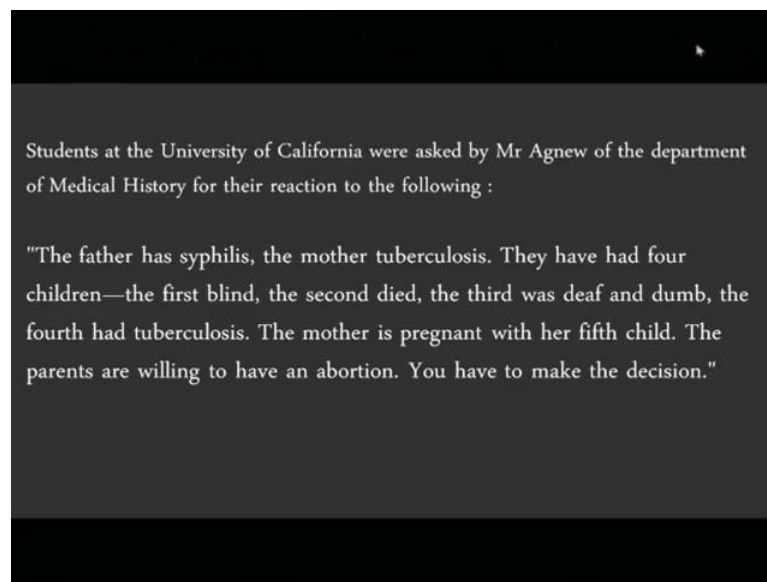


Now if you really want to become a good listener, what is the first step that you should take? The first step in becoming a good listener is to keep the mind open. So, the mind

should be open Hans Robert Scholar says this thing in one of his book "The mind is like a parachute- it functions only when it is open". So, it is like a parachute it functions only when it is opened, if you keep your mind loose it becomes dysfunctional it is not working at all.

Now, let me give it an illustrative example of why you should keep your mind open. And then I will conclude with the final lesson that you should be learning from this lecture on listening.

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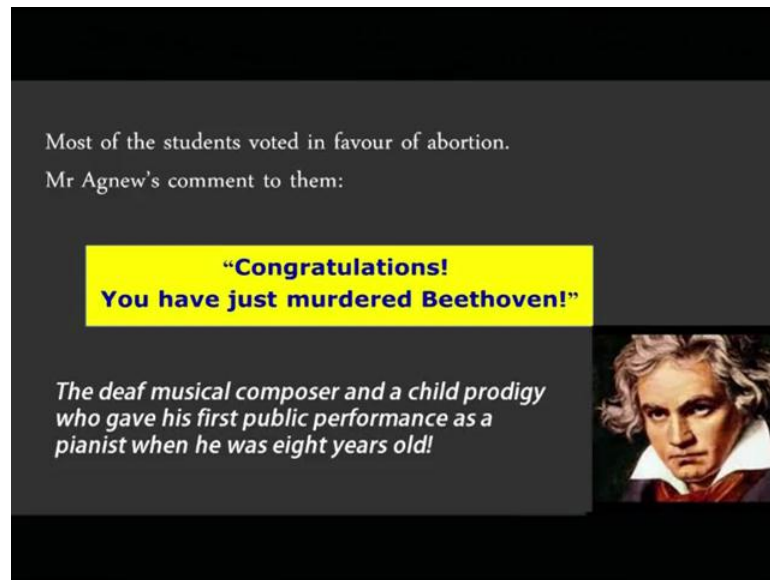


Look at the small incidents; students at the University of California were asked by Mr. Agnew of the department of Medical History for their reaction to the following. So, the faculty gave a kind of situation and wanted the students to react. The situation "The father has syphilis, the mother tuberculosis. 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.

So, when you listen you are given such as case where there is chronic disease and then there is chronic death. So, now this is the fifth child and then you are given the choice of

making the decision for the parents. Obviously, like most of you would have thought and then the way you would have responded.

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

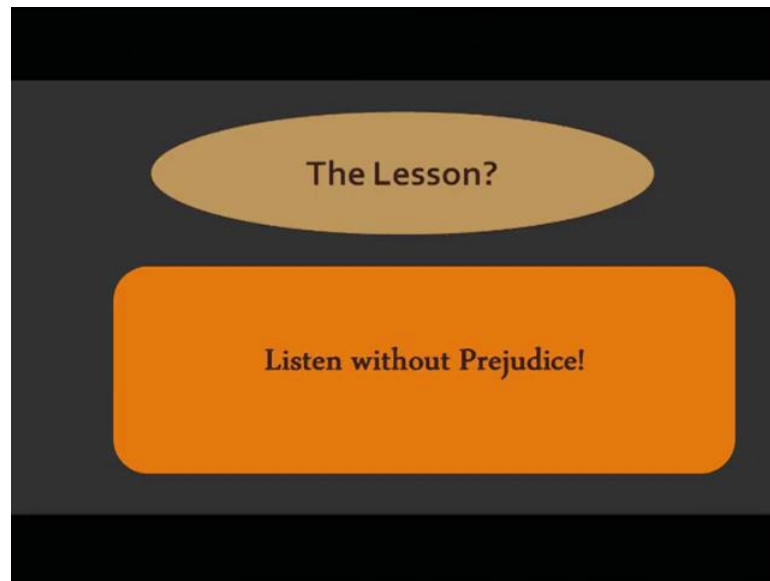
**“Congratulations!
You have just murdered Beethoven!”**

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

Most of students voted in favor of abortion, because they thought that the child will definitely not survive because of the chronic conditions in which the other children group up and then they died. But Mr. Agnew’s comment to them he said “Congratulations you have just murdered Beethoven”. Beethoven for those who do not know is the deaf musical composer and a child prodigy who gave his first public performance as a pianist when he was 8 years old.

So, what would have happened if the parents decided to abort this child? The world would have lost a musical genius.

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So, the lesson from this is that you should learn to listen without prejudice. Keep the mind open listen without any prejudice; prejudice means any kind of preconceive thoughts, any kind of pre supposition that you form a preconceive notion that somebody is right wrong because of the ways certain things appear to be. And then even before you actually experience the communication with the person you decide or you become judgmental about the character or behavior or the action of the person and which is very bad in terms of good communicator.

At the end of this keep this in mind listen without prejudices, try to keep your mind open and in the next lecture let me continue with giving you suggestions as how you can become an effective listener or an active listener. With this I conclude this first lecture of this week. Thank you, I wish that you have a nice day.

Thank you for watching this video.