

Soft Skills Development
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Lecture – 03
What to Listen for and Why

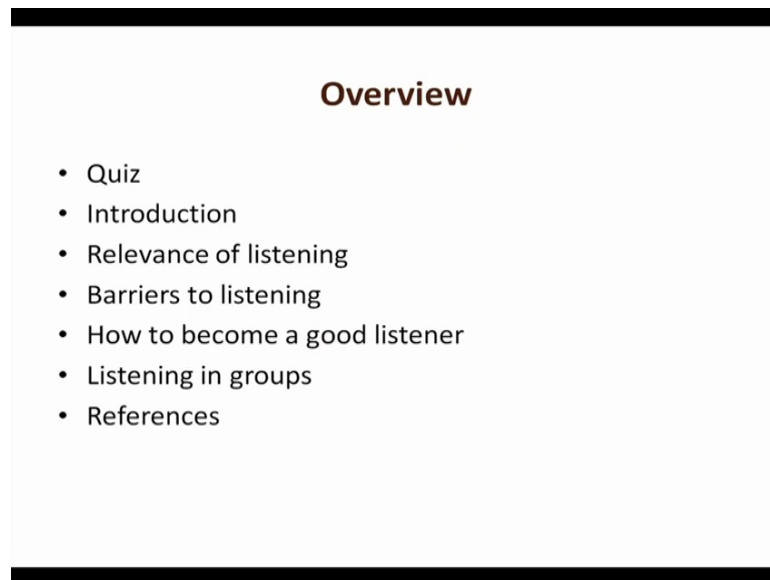
Hello friends. Today we come to the third part of our lecture and, as I have already said in the earlier talks our focus will be on "What to listen for and why". Now, as I have said in some of the earlier talks - listening is the very very important component of our life and sometimes I jokingly tell my friends or rather my student friends when they join me that probably they are much better listeners than I am; and there is a reason for that.

We find that when we start over lives, we start of trying to make sense of whatever we here because as kids unless we are able to learn the language of the adults we will be not able to express our desires. And if you are not able to express our needs and desires we will not get the things what we want. So, there is an existential necessity to learn a new language which is been used by the adults. And in order to do that we have to use the ears to first listen and master the language.

Speech is definitely very very important components because as we listen we speak. So, the two definitely go side by side. Especially, when we are young kids both the things go on side by side. In fact, young kids do not listen much they will make a lot of pebbling noise they speak a lot, but at one point of time they realize that listening is very essential if they have to learn a language and they have to learn a language because without learning the language their desires cannot be fulfilled, the needs cannot be taken care off.

In some sense you might say that this is the origin of listening and as we proceed we find that we go to schools where, we are ask to listen lectures, we go to colleges, universities, where we are again ask to listen, even in our adult life has happens with many of you are now you are ask to listen. What happens in the process is that most of the students become very good listeners, whereas most of us who are no longer students and continue to speak become poor listeners. So, that is the light and humorous side of things, but there is definitely a truth and element of truth the fact in that saying that listening is very very significant and a very very significant part of our lives.

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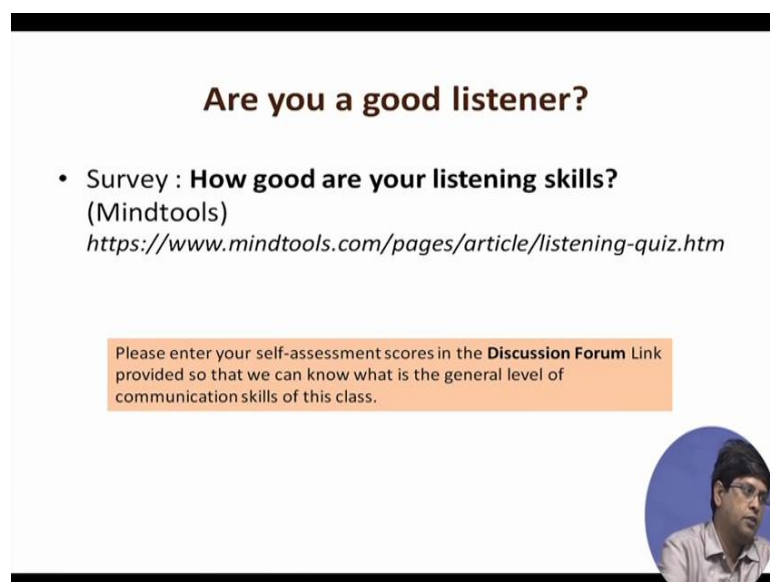


Overview

- Quiz
- Introduction
- Relevance of listening
- Barriers to listening
- How to become a good listener
- Listening in groups
- References

So, this is the overview of what we are going to do today we will start up with the "Quiz" to find out how do you feel about your own listening. After you have completed the quiz you can go to the discussion and you have listen to the lecture then you find out and make an assessment of how correctly do you feel that you had been able to complete that page.


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Are you a good listener?

- Survey : **How good are your listening skills?**
(Mindtools)
<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/listening-quiz.htm>

Please enter your self-assessment scores in the **Discussion Forum** Link provided so that we can know what is the general level of communication skills of this class.

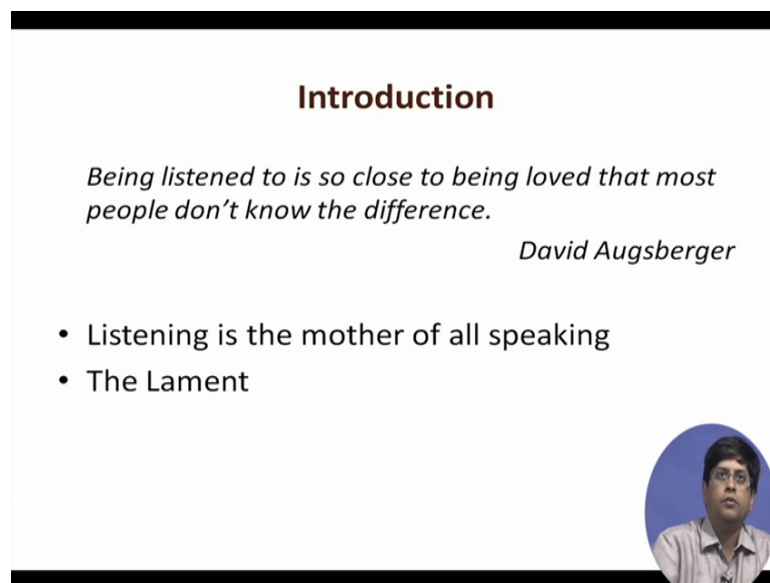


So, that this is the "Quiz" that we are going to focus on, you complete the quiz and then you tell me in the discussion whether your own assessment in the page before you listen

to this presentation from me and after your listen to the presentation or perceptively different or not ok.

Then, we will move on after the quiz to the introduction, a relevance of listening, barriers of listening, how to become a good listener, listening in groups and of course the references.

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Introduction

Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people don't know the difference.

David Augsberger

- Listening is the mother of all speaking
- The Lament



So, the first point is that listening has a very very dimension of interpersonal communication of emotions of support that I do not feel that it is appropriate to just talk about listening in the context of how to memorize better, how to understand better, how to capture the main points very effectively.

Now, if you are looking at that kind of listening as well that is good enough for exams, that is good enough for students, but if we are looking at the interpersonal context, if you are looking at the soft skills context then listening of the different kind needs to be looked at and that is what we will do as we proceed. So, the point is that very often, listening to somebody is the way of telling the other person that you care. And in that sense little earlier I already shared with you how listening is the mother of all speaking because unless you listen to young to the adults you are not able to grow up as a child and the new language; the language of the adults. But the other side of listening which is the side of emotions is best illustrated by a short story by (Refer Time: 05:37) check out the well known Russian writer and I will briefly share the story with you.

In one of the cities of Russia is a cold evening probably a long day, but a long better cold day and we are introduced to the central character (Refer Time: 06:00) who is the cab driver, who is the horse cab driver. And we are introduced to a person who is sitting quietly, totally defeated, bend double as the snow is falling upon him, upon his little horse and the snow is falling all around him. He has been waiting for a very long time without being able to take a passenger. After 2 hours of waiting the first passenger comes in he is some official, on some official business, a humorous kind of a person. And as this person is driving on the road there are minor accidents or minor miscommunications people are getting angry with him and all that. And the officer jokes and pokes fun at him and in light hurtled and a casual way. And at some point of time (Refer Time: 06:56) I want to feels that may be the officer is not interested know about him and he tells the officer that do you know sir, my son died a week back and the officer shows a little bit of interest and this man turns around, the cab driver turns around and talk to him, but in the process you see that he is not able to focusing the road and officer gets angry with him.

And after, that he wants to make communication again, he wants to talk again, but the officer has forgotten all about it, he is no longer interested. He drops the officer and he waits again and picks up 3 youths, 2 of them (Refer Time: 07:39) talking, casually, in an interesting way and the third one is (Refer Time: 07:44) who seems to be a cruel kind of a person. And they poke fun at him, they beat him up in light hearted way, and he forgives them in his mind. Again with them also he is trying his to best to communicate and say that do you know my son died a week back and even keeps on trying to speak about it and they are not listening to him.

So, this is all he gets manages to get only 2 fairs he comes back get tired to the place of rest where the other 2 cab drivers are also taking rest finds a person, who is half asleep, half drunk, say the dude like a drink, and this person wakes up fitfully and says that who would not like a drink and the moment he finds him awake he is again trying to say the same story with him and with the same result. At the end of this he goes to the small horse to take care of the horse to give him food, to nourish him, and then he starts talking to the horse and as he starts talking to the horse, he finds that the horse is looking at him in a very fixed way and then he tells it all, then he narrate the story of his son's death to the horse, that is how the story comes to an end.

It is a very cognizant story because it is a story about listening or not listening and it is the story about interpersonal communication where in the first 3 instances communication fails and in the last instance where he is trying to tell the horse that if you had a son and if he had died how do you feel and all that; you realize that listening is so very important or at least the horse may be listening, the horse may be hearing, that is the different issue all together, but at least the fact that he feels that the horse is listening becomes so very very important, in order to unload to share he is grief.

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Relevance of listening in communication

- How We Spend Our Communication Time
 - Writing: 9%
 - Reading: 16%
 - Talking: 30%
 - Listening: 45%

– Worth, 2004 in Palmer, 2014

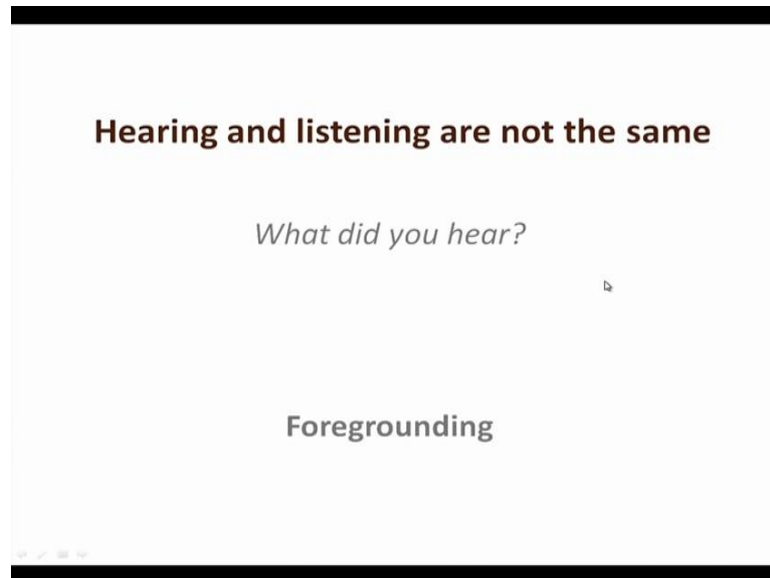
According to research, most people believe that they are good listeners. However, findings suggest that the actual efficiency is at only about 25% of our capabilities.

Psychalive, "Are you a good listener?"

Now, the relevance of listening one research reference to which is given at the back tells us that listening is may be 45 percent of what we do and another research tells us that mostly people believe that they are good listener that is why in the quiz I asked you to take that quiz right at the beginning, because you might find that most of you feel that you are good listeners. Even, I feel or I used to feel that I am a good listener, but the actually efficiency is probably, much less than that, probably we are capable of listening much more intensely than we actually listen, we do not throw in everything into our listening, but if you do that probably we would benefit a lot from that.

Now, that is one of the things that we would like to talk about as we proceed with this session in the context of interpersonal communication, soft skills, coning of this listening skill strategy.

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Now, all this while you have been listening to me in your environment it would be using head phone or you might be in a bus, you might be sitting at home, but for a moment stop listening to me.

Try, to listen to whatever you are able to hear all around you, give a moment to that. I am sure that now that you are focusing not on my voice, because my voice anyway is not there, but on whatever else is there in your surrounding you must be able to hear something or the other or if not anything else you would be able to focus on the silence that is there in the absence of my voice.

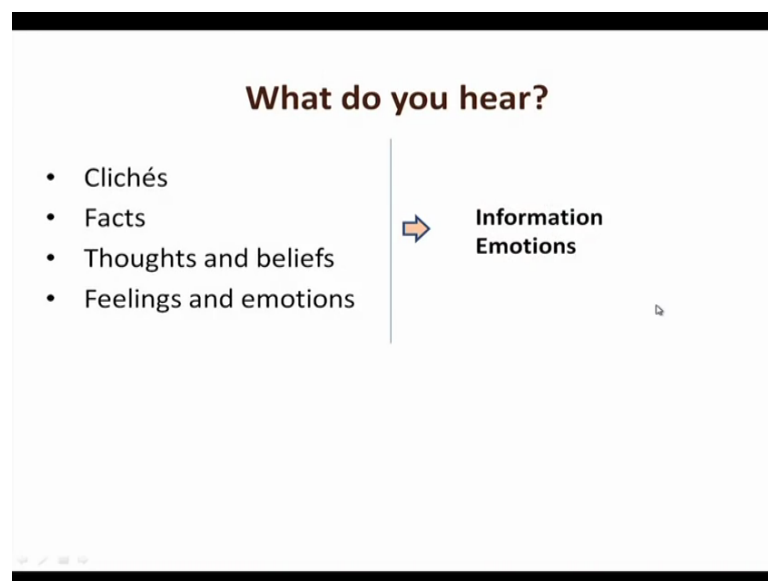
Now, the point I would like to make is that listening has to be differentiated from hearing. Lot of sounds which are around us, but we need not necessarily listen to all of them; you see that the brain is capable of focusing on or the mind or the attention whatever you call it on the just single thing at a point of time. So, when I am focusing something obviously I am not in a position to focus another thing; when you focusing on my voice when you are listening to me you are no longer able to focus on the ambient sounds which surround me. So, this is very very important that every time listening to express you or foregrounding something as opposed to something else.

So, my voice fore-grounded against whatever small noises around or silence; and when we are talking about this aspect of foregrounding, even when you are listening to somebody within that also certain kind of foregrounding take place. You can listen for

information, you can listen for specific emotions, whenever you are listening for some particular things you are obviously foregrounding that as oppose to something else. This is just to make you aware of the fact that listening is not a very simple thing there are complex things involved; attention is involved and you attain to specific things at specific points of time. If I say that please listen in the next few words to the number of times I utter the expression 'the' then you are not listening to anything else you are forgetting about the content, you are only focusing on how many times I utter the word 'the'.

So, you see that even in the small exercise that we are doing right now, when you are listening to my saying about the: t h e, you are seeing that the listening is diverted in the that detection and we are missing out many of things. So, having realize that it is a complex process the entire brain is involved in a fairly complicated way with the entire thing, our memory is involved attention classification of information lot of things are going on we will talk about some of them.

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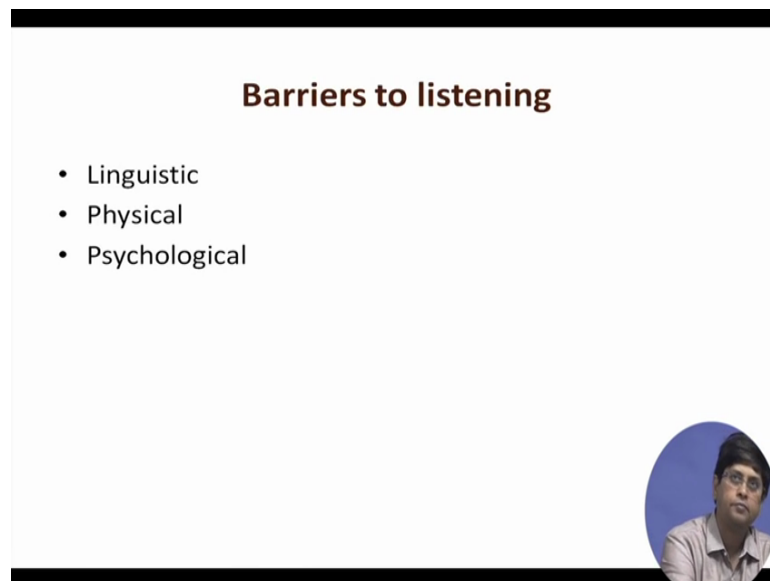


Having realized that, now let us first find out what is exactly that we use, what are the things we listen for. When anything is said there are things which are already known to us or are being said in a repeated way this happen to be cases or well known facts in which you may or may not be interested. We are listening to information being communicated so facts, in the process we are listening to some bodies (Refer Time:

14:31) thoughts and beliefs what here see believes in what kind of an attitude that person has about specific things for instance, after listening to me for let say 1 and half hours or 1 hour and 20 minutes you get to know something about how, what I believe in, what I do not, even within this given small context or communication. And then of course feelings and emotions, display of feelings or emotions, display of warmth things like that.

So, information and emotions these are the key things that permit. So, even (Refer Time: 15:05) fit into the category of information, thoughts and beliefs information, these manage to give us information. And they also communicate emotions to us, thoughts and beliefs teaches you that manage to safe the way we perceive somebody else emotion when we are listening. So, it is a fairly complex process, but the basic point I am trying to make is that these are the key things which we glen from listening, as we are listening attentively.

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Barriers to listening

- Linguistic
- Physical
- Psychological

But, there can be barriers listening and it is very important to realize that in interpersonal communication these barriers are to overcome. So, what are the barriers we are talking about? That can be Linguistic barriers like: you do not understand me or you do not understand the way I speak this language. Physical barriers: you are not able to hear me, you are not able to listen to me, because of whatever reasons, and you have poor hearing. And we have Psychological barriers. Psychological barriers: where you do not want to

listen, you have no intention of listening; you believe that you know everything that is to know about it. So, these are the 3 barriers of listening.

The first one and second one are not the once which we are focusing on has we are discussing about listening, when we are discussing listening we are talking about the "Psychological barriers", because these are the key barriers we have to overcome. So, when I am talking about good listening in the next few slides I am essentially, talking about Empathetic Listening. Listening which help us communicate better in social cultural environments; and listening has the kind of therapy, has a kind of a technique through which we improve our understanding to other people and we improve our understanding ourselves. Now, that is something which you would be really meaningful.

Friends, what I am trying to share with you and of course, this is not my own references will tell you that obviously I have borrowed some of the concept from others, but what I am trying to share with you and what I strong believe in is that - learning smartly about the tricks of listening is not good enough. If, you learn how to be a good listener, you also learn in the process how to be a better human being and probably that is going to be more effective in the long run.

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So, how to become a good listener? I have kind of classified the various ideas under 3 categories; the first one is Preparation: Talk less and listen more. You see that in most contexts if you sit down silently and look around you find that people are speaking a lot.

If you observed groups you will find that in groups one person is the speaking and may be 2 people have interrupted him a mean while and the third one is waiting for an opportunity or a break and if it does not get a breaks his out or she outs and speaks in.

So, what basically is happening is that people are intensely interested in expressing their ideas, their views, we are centered on ourselves, you are focused on ourselves; we want our voices to be heard. Now speaking is important we will talk about speaking in the next session, but before we speak silence becomes very very significant. Now if you make this a small activity as small exercise that in a group suddenly sit down you realize that you had listen to this talk and you sit down quietly and listen to other people no longer participating as a speaker, but silently listening to the other people. You will realize that how everybody disparately trying to speak. And if you are able to control this expression to a very great extend we are able to understand the needs and requirements of the other people which is a key component of emotional intelligence which will be doing at the later point of time. So, you can consider whatever, I am sharing with you as a kind of preparation for that.

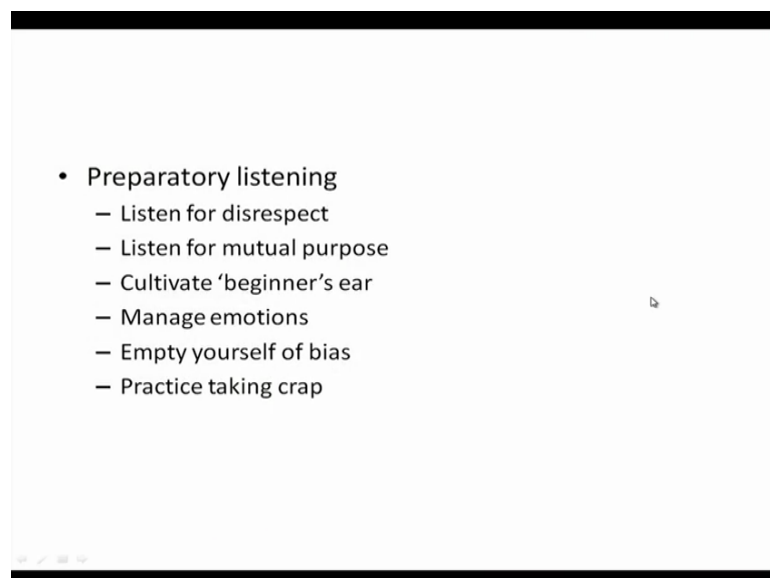
Now, the second point is that “Do not Interrupt - unless needed”. Now we are all in hurry in a modern civilization we are all in hurry, but at least when you are beginning a conversation, at least for a few minutes allow the other person to speak without interrupting. We are very often do not manage to do that, we believe that our time is precious this person is eating our time so I must interrupt that person. But also make a practice of not interrupting the person, unless you find that the time is slowly sleeping away. You find that the initial process of patiently listening to somebody gives you a certain degree of credibility.

There the person starts realizing that you are actually interested in what he is saying. So, when you interrupt him at a later point of time when it is required he does not take offense, he does not feels that he is it is just a business communication or whatever. Because, whether we are talking about business communication, whether we are talking about social cultural communication, in the context of workplace of needs, requirements, deep down we have a need for felling happy and this to a very great extend modifies our transactions the success or failure of our negotiations and varies others things of our persuasion strategies, of our being good leaders. So, this is something which you need to

be very much aware of that a very often a good leader happens to be also a good listener or a patience listener.

So basically, the first 2 point are kind of summed up in the last point which is developing patience, understanding, because when you are doing all these thing you are not only developing patience you are developing in sight, you are also developing understanding and these become very significant as you listen. In the discussion forum that will be placing very soon as along with this talk you will find that we will take you to certain interesting videos, we will take you to some interesting activities, which link you to listening and which take your feedback about listening and this will kind of supplement what I am sharing with you right now in various contexts.

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Now, you might call it preparatory listening you might even call it Preparatory too listening in whichever way you take it. Now there are things that you need to listen for; Listen for disrespect, Listen for respect, wise this which what we mean to say is that you are listening for the attitude, is it that somebody is showing a negative attitude. Because what happens is that our behavior, our interaction, our feeling towards others is very often sub consistently determined by what we listen too. Deep down probably we feel in some way that this person is offending me and without even realizing that you are become aggressive.

So, if you develop the awareness and identify which are the points which seem to be offensive, then you develop a certain degree of clarity, you realize that whether this person is actually been offensive or not so. Once you realize that you decide you can determine because now your anger, your anxiety, your irritation, is at a consist level you have realized about that whether, you should react aggressively or patiently your strategies can be much more meaningfully articulated, because you are looking for dis-respective or looking for dis-harmony and you are looking deep down within you to find out what is it in other persons voice, tone, speech, text, that is causing it.

Listen for mutual purpose; now this is a training which makes it possible for you to have very good interpersonal communication what is it that you are interested in, what is it the other person is interested in. Now this increases self-awareness it also increases the awareness about the other person, her needs or his needs, and you would be able to speak more meaningfully in a more sustained way, constructive way, about the possible way that you can collaborate, co operate, interact, in a mutually purposeful manner.

The third point that we would like to focus on his Cultivate the beginner's ear or cultivating the attitude of as if you are listening for the first time, attitude, of the sense of wonder. When you do that your perception is (Refer Time: 24:08) obviously, it is not possible at all points of time to do that, but if you try to develop this kind of an attitude, your perception is happened because every time you are you are more energetic, you are more attentive, you are more vigorous, your memories into it, your total concentrations in to it. So, this is the beginners here as if you are listening to somebody for the first time. And you are able to listen to a lot more things, lot more annoyances in terms of innocence, as well as information when you do this

Manage your emotions; now you see that if you train in this particular way of listening it is easy for you to manage your emotions, because you are now aware of your own emotions. And once you aware of your own emotions you know that you are irritated and you know the cause of this irritation and you are able dissect and know exactly what is causing it whether it is the other person unknowingly causing irritation or is knowingly causing irritation then you can control yourself. When you know that it is unintentionally you do not hurt the other person, you do not get aggressive when the other person. And miscommunication which possible could have be taken place or would have taken place is kind of stopped. The miscommunication is something which you are able to avoid.

Empty yourself of bias: now, this gets link to the element of cultivating the beginners here, and it basically means that when you are listening for instance the moment you are come and the moment you are switch on your machine and listen to this talk, you are Ok - this is what the other by this person has told me the last class was probably would talk in the same way. Now, this is a "bias". Every time we listen to somebody, if I am listening to my family, my parents or my son or daughter or my friend; since I know the person I kind of bring in all the biases, bringing all the peace or possessions about that person in to my listening. Now if we can get rid of this then we listen to thing (Refer Time: 26:10) again in a new way and in a much more perspective and meaningful way.

Practice taking crap: now, this becomes very very relevant in the context of interpersonal communication, in a context of commerce trade business communication, in the context of socializing. The ability to patiently here things, the ability to patiently listen to the things which you may not agree with and not to react to that very strongly, not to react to in a consistent way where you know what exactly you are doing and why you are doing it.

Now, when you practiced these elements to a very great extent you are listening improves in a significant way. Now, let us come to the Listening element per say, we focus on different accepts of "Listening".

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- Listening
 - Listen for emotions – for underlying needs
 - Listen in order to share (thus comfort)
 - Listen to others as you would want them to listen to you
 - Check, feedback
 - Listen for content, in order to connect
 - Tell me more – genuine curiosity
 - Defensive – non-defensive
 - Listen for differences – towards empathy

Now the listen for emotions I have already highlighted this, but again when you are "Listening" focus on the specific elements, the intonation, the tone, the facial expression, which we will discuss at a later point of time. So, that you can understand what the person wants you may or may not give that to a person, but at least you are aware of it.

Now, let us focus on listen in order to share and this is something I have highlighted in the context of the short story that we did together the element and sharing is something which is an asset to a good listener because, when you share as a listener, the person who is talking to need not actually wants some advice from you, any advice from you the person who is talking to you just might to unload and you able to listen to that person and unloading and appreciate that sharing you are in a very very intense way being successful as a communicator in emotional context. This happens to sharpen your emotion intelligence and it is going to be very very meaningful as you proceed with any kind of social cultural transaction.

Listen in order to listen to others as you want to listen to yourself now, this is very important because then empathy, the element of trying to understand how other people feel is something which automatically comes in to your listening. Going briefly, you move to check take feedback now this is very important where the element of speaking comes in very mildly, but it is important that you cross check that you have understood correctly where ever there is an ambiguity you need to check and need to take a feedback. So, we are moving in a (Refer Time: 29:03) in the direction of speaking, but obviously, listening and speaking cannot not be separated although for the sake of convinced today we are focusing on listening only.

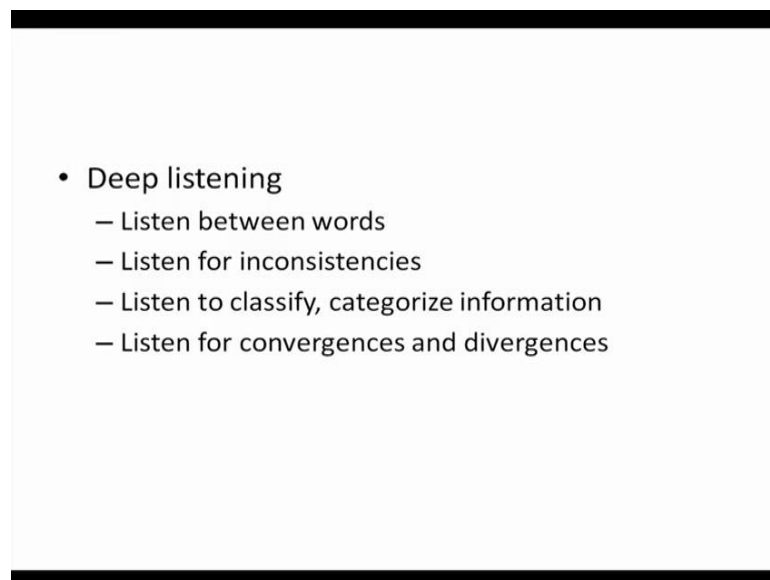
Listen for content in order to connect: because you see that listening is, so that you can make sense of things. So, you can link up your ideas with the other person's ideas. "Genuine curiosity": I will cultivate Genuine curiosity, tell me more, let me hear what you have to say, it is not that you are just doing it casually, the way it happened with their officer in this story the lament that he ask casually then forgot all about it.

Now, not that, but listening whenever you are listening for whatever time you listening, listen with all intensity, with all interest, defensive, non-defensive now very often, when we are listening there is a tendency to be defensive where ever things are told about us, which are critical we tend to be difference if it is very important to develop open attitude

to face it, to listen and to react your own thoughts and to open up your own thoughts and not to be afraid of what you are listening to.

Now, that as a significant effect in the way you can negotiate, the way you converse with the other person, even in difficult situations, but you need to be convinced that this makes sense and you need to try it out again we will try to divide experiment or activities which you can do by accessing the discussion forum for some of the things that I have already shared here with you. Listen for differences: because when we talk to somebody else the person is somebody other than us ourselves, the person is somebody other than myself. So, this person obviously, will have differences and it is important to aware of how the other person is different from me not necessary to disagree you can always look at others point of you and agree it is not important that you develop a sense of disagreement, disagreement, but what is important is that you learn to understand how the other person is different, how what he is saying or she is saying different to acknowledge the difference and accept it as something which is yet part of our existence that makes transaction much easier.

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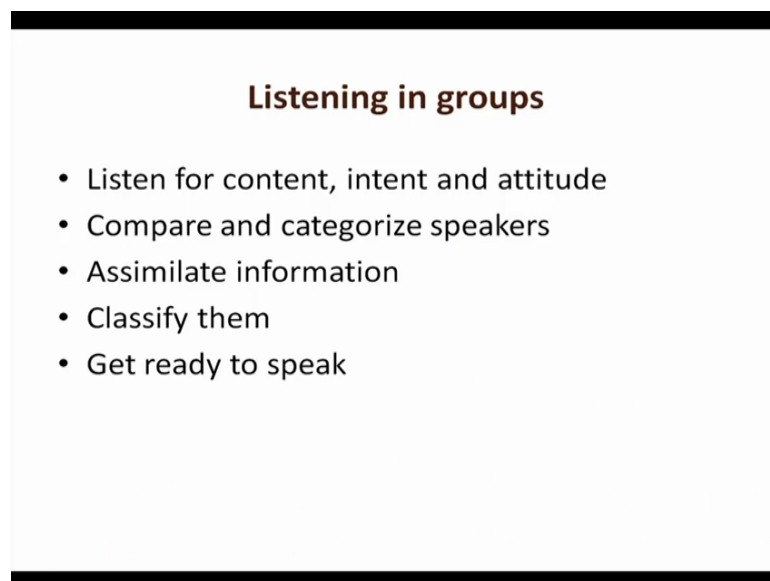
- 
- Deep listening
 - Listen between words
 - Listen for inconsistencies
 - Listen to classify, categorize information
 - Listen for convergences and divergences

Finally, deep listening which involves listen, listen between words: because very often what we say and what we mean I may be different we will talk about this in detail when we are talking about nonverbal communication. Body language dis-seat and there we will bring in a speech also and text sometimes we say things, we do not mean, sometimes

we do not say things mean. So, it is very important to guess that and that would involve looking at nonverbal communication as well. So, that will be an element which will be taking up again. Listen for Inconsistencies: Because, that is very important when you are doing any kind of transaction. Listen for to classify, categorize information: Because, so that you can store away information in a meaningful way it is important for the kind of listening that you are right now.

Because you are learning, listening for conversions, and diversions. So, we have already highlighted, but even in academic context even when emotions are not involved where facts are involved you may agree, you may not agree, you may appreciate, you may not be appreciate, who listen for this and be aware of the fact that these are the changes, these are the kinds of responses that are taken place within your mind. So, this is the other thing that you need to do.

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Listening in groups

- Listen for content, intent and attitude
- Compare and categorize speakers
- Assimilate information
- Classify them
- Get ready to speak

Now, finally, we before wrap up this session we will focus on "Listening in groups" because, conversation is dialog's with 1 percent or with different people of different percent of time is one thing, but conversation is again another important aspect of Listening and whether you are having a group discussion, mock group discussion for a job interview or a genuine group discussion in your work place these element become significant.

So, listen for content, the intent, that this people have and their attitude because this will decide how you are gone to response to them. Compare and categorize speakers classify them into different categories know, who, has which kind of an attitude this will be significant. Assimilate this information; classify them as we have said about classifying them earlier. And when you have done all this things this will become habit as you try to cultivate this practice get ready to speak. So, you would be able to do this very quickly as you proceed with this techniques when you try it out when you try it with your friends and different kinds of places where you are permitted to listen or you find a context where you listening you, develop this habits and you find that you are able to this things and this makes you much more meaningful.

Now, you take a pause, and I ask you this question; we have being talking about listening, you have already taken a quiz and listening, now you tell me do you feel that until this point of time you had learned everything there was about listening or is it that today in this small short session you have been able to learn something new, something which you feel is meaningful. Just answer this question truthfully try out some of the things and may be your response, your perception about your own listening will change also some extent. It happened to be the same with me as I proceeded to explore listening as some as the serious area of exploration before I started interacting with you.

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Summary of key points

- Listening is very important in communication
- Most of can improve our listening skills
- Empathy, sensitivity, alertness and patience can significantly improve our listening skills
- Listening is the first step in the direction of speaking
- Listening in group interactions can be socially and professionally very helpful

So, at the end we have the summary of the key points in this slide. And in the next class we will be taking up speaking as one of the fundamental other communication strategies which we are going to touch upon again and again as we proceed.

Thank you friends.