

Soft Skills
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Lecture - 14
Listening Skills

Friends, today I am going to speak on Listening as one of the ingredients of Soft Skills. Till now we have been saying the reading is important, writing is important and speaking also is important, but as you grow up you will find that listening is as important as all 3 skills we have talked about earlier. Now if I ask you a question that can listening be a skill is listening helpful, and why should we have a talk or a lecture on listening skills? At practice lists of soft skills you will find that as you grow up the ladders in the business world. Or you have to exchange deals, or you have to sign agreements listening plays a vital role.

Now, it may a times appears quite odd, if somebody says do you listen you often come up with the answers that you have been listening throughout. Imagine once you are in a school days and as you went from the school to the college, you have been listening to the lectures every lecture you have to attend, you also run sort of attendance if you do not attend a particular lecture.


But the question is if you ask yourself did you really listen, then perhaps you may also feel yourself in a problematic situation. Because if you listen you should have remembered and much depends upon how you listen dear friends all of us often hear our mother say. You never listen to what I say. And the meaning is not that you do not hear, but rather the meaning is that you do not pay attention to what is being said. And that is where listening is at a loss. You have been listening a lot, but whatever you listen how significant is it?

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What is Listening?

Listening is an art

- All hearing is not listening
- It is a skill
- It requires adequate practice to learn listening



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Now, what is listening? We can say listening is a skill listening is an art. Remember you have been hearing several stories, right in the lap of your grandmas and grandpas. And some of them you also remember well. Why do you remember them well friends, because you listened to them very intently. What happens is in other situations we do not listen, rather we simply hear and all hearing is not listening.

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- An important part of communication process.
- A means of gathering information.
- All listening is not hearing.

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You hear a lot you hear a lot of music you hear a lot of songs, but do you remember all this songs no exactly not you simply remember those songs which some way or the other

affect you which some way or the other are very dear to you. Now this listening becomes significant because you listened it with the purpose. Listening is a skill and most of the time you find in your classrooms, when your minds are suddenly drifted the teacher says do you listen to what I say, and the meaning is that perhaps you are not paying attention to your simply hearing.

Now, listening requires adequate practice, it actually requires adequate practice. And there are several opportunities several circumstances where you will find had do you listened sometimes you know a counsel will say, had you listen to my advice you could not have come to such a situation. You could not have come to such a pass. The meaning is perhaps you did not avoid by what word said, hence we can say that listening is important. In all source of communication you find that unless and until you listen not hear you actually do not have anything to react. Whether it is a form of whatever form of communication it is especially a in terms of oral communication. And the different forms of oral communication you actually have to listen a lot only then you can respond.

Now, the tragedy today is most of us actually want to speak, but then who will listen. Unless and until we have listeners we cannot become good speakers. Now there are different ways you can listen and listening is an important part of communication process. We have been saying since the beginning, that communication is a 2 way process it is actually a sharing of information by someone who has and to someone who actually wants to have it. Now there is another implication to it.

So, somebody is speaks as a sender you speak, but to the other person if he does not listen, then what happens the communication ends in a failure. Hence in all source of communication listening is important. Most of us often experience that people who are well versed they are, so because they have been very good listeners not that they have been very good speakers. Even if you take an interview of all the celebrated speakers of the word you will find that they have been listening throughout my dear friend. And when they listen they listen with a purpose.

So, what you should also try to do is because you have to carry out business transactions and you have certain aims and objectives. So, you have to be a very good listener. And once you start listening because it is an art it is a skill it has to be practiced. And all listening is not hearing. Now what is the difference basic difference rather between

listening. And hearing when you hear for example, suppose you listen to news, but do you really remember all the news items.

Nowadays there has been a facility of audio visual system. I mean you are watching over the television you are not only listening, but you are watching, but even there you watch more than you listen. And you know you can come into a difficult situation if you do not listen to a particular thing properly.

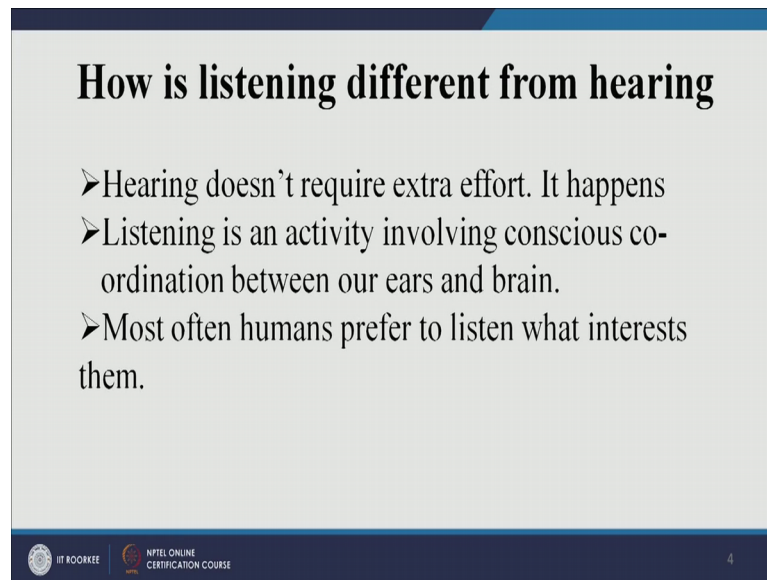
And nowadays in most of the business transactions, it has to be ensured that you listen well. Because when you hear you are not that conscious, that is why you are not able to concentrate too much on listening. We have seen there are several examples nowadays there are stray cases of accidents also, because many of us are actually in a world of music we say that we are listening, but then when you are listening and you are listening intently in your driving naturally you are concentrating only on one part of listening, you are not concentrating on the other part of the listening that a bike or say another vehicle is coming at your back.

So, when you are listening you are to listen very intently, and know 2 listening can take place it is not like hearing a music and remembering. It is not like listening to a song and remembering unless and until you listen it carefully you cannot remember it. So, listening can be a form of gathering information. We sometimes come across many people who are not that much into the business of education. But still they have a lot of knowledge. How did they get that knowledge? They actually have been participating. In different (Refer Time: 09:18) they have been participating in different congregations, they have been a part of a different say conferences, they have been part of different religious discourses. And they actually listen to it so intently that they remember and prove themselves to be knowledgeable enough.

Hence listening has a power. Listening actually provides you a lot of information listening is a means of information gathering. So, if you make use of listening properly, you will also be in the position to gathered more and more knowledge.

Now, as we said there is a difference between listening and hearing.

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How is listening different from hearing

- Hearing doesn't require extra effort. It happens
- Listening is an activity involving conscious coordination between our ears and brain.
- Most often humans prefer to listen what interests them.

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Hearing actually does not require an extra effort, we often see that your radio is playing on songs, and you are concentrating on the sums of your arithmetic isn't it? How is it possible? So, you are concentrating more on your mathematics than on the music or than the song being played.

So, what is important here is, so at that time you are hearing you are not listening. But when you are in a classroom the best way to gather information in the classroom and to have a good content is to listen properly, because listening is an activity which requires conscious participation; conscious coordination between the speaker and the listener. Between your ears and the brain, when you hear only one part of your is active. I mean it comes to your ear, but since you are not attaching too much importance, it does not go to your brain.

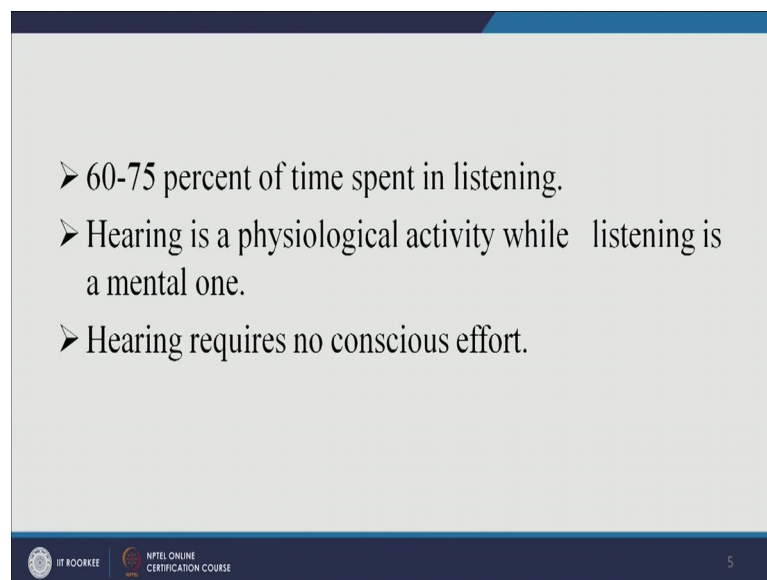
So, in order to have an effective listening you are to ensure that both your ears as well as your brain are conscious. Most often it has been observed and found that humans prefer to listen what interests them. Remember when you are having a journey, I mean a train journey, how many times have you been able to develop a sort of wrapper or a friendship with the co passenger. How many times? You will often find if there is a young guy like you on the other berth, you start talking to him.

And after some time since your interests start matching with each other you become very good friends. And the journey becomes memorable. And not only does it confined

to becoming a memorable event, rather it turns out into a friendship. It is all because of listening to each other, but sometimes you come across a person whom just either by outlook or by his movements or by his say behaviour or by his demeanor, you do not like naturally you do not open a talk with him. You do not start a conversation with him.

So, and there naturally you do not tend to listen to what he says. Or even if there is a talk between the 2 you do not pay much importance, or you do not feel interested in because the interests of both the parties do not match. So, most the humans often prefer to listen what interests them. And what interests them? Naturally that listening is given extra care that listening is taken into consideration, though as researchers say 60 to 75 percent of time is spent in listening. Yet listening is at a loss because we are not trained to listening.

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- 60-75 percent of time spent in listening.
- Hearing is a physiological activity while listening is a mental one.
- Hearing requires no conscious effort.

Hearing is only a physiological activity around you so many things happen so many sounds are there you hear then, but you do not concentrate on them while listening is totally a mental one. When something interests you or when something has an effect or something that may affect you, you tend to listen more. Hearing does not require as conscious effort as listening requires.

But remember in order to be successful in life, as well as in business we need to develop the listening skills. We need to develop intent, concentrated listening and how is that possible. Most of the time you often hear complaints from your friends, from your

inmates, from your family members, that you never listen to what I say. And the message is loud, the message is that you do not pay attention to what is being said.

Now, since listening is a skill, how can this skill be learnt? How can this art be developed? Because you know every now and then we have been talking specially in the business organization that the day is not far when we will be having a paperless office. Remember we have also come across circumstances and times where for everything you had to write. You had to write and you had to take the help of paper, pen and paper. So, and that actually took a lot of time.

Nowadays with adequate facilities, especially communication facilities available you find that this paperwork which use to be very cumbersome and which use to be a very troublesome. Now it is only because of listening, it is only because of listening through whatever way either through meeting or say through conversation or through brief chats or whatsoever this paperwork has come down and we can think of having a paperless office in the days to come.

Now if we are to start learning listening as a process. First of all we have to go through different layers, through different stages. And the first stage is hearing. As we said hearing is a physical or is a physiological activity.

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Listening as a Process

- Hearing
- Filtering
- Interpreting
- Responding
- Remembering

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The first stage is that when you hear. And when you hear because you know it is a physiological activity, and you have to make it a mental one. You have to transform it to a mental activity. So, what needs to be done is you actually need to take an extra effort so that whatever you have heard you are going to filter it. And while filtering you know it is very important, how you filter a particular piece of information. And so, many things come into operation. The first is which word was used, which expression was used, which idiom was used, in what way was a particular expression said.

So, all these you have to do, and when you do that suppose somebody in the midst of his speech or while giving an instruction, or giving an advice use the word which you do not understand naturally it will some way or the other block or disturb the process of listening. Hence, for listening from hearing you have to go you have to enter the process of filtering. Once you are filtered suppose you have come to know the meaning suppose you have come to relate the meaning, then comes the process of interpreting. Because you know listening has to be used in business organization for taking decisions for making certain announcements, for informing people, for planning a new suppose for launching a new product, for announcing a new hike.

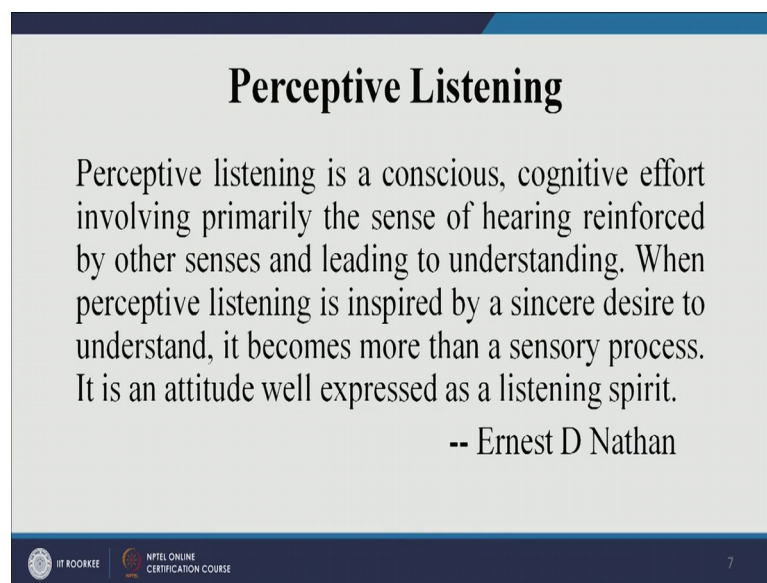
So, in that case you have to interpret what you have heard. Remember the GM of a particular company gives a piece of instruction to his employees. That has to follow a process as we have discussed in the communication flow that it has to go from one channel to another from one person to another, depending upon the higher radical needs and whatsoever depending upon the various tables it has to pass.

So, in that course the message has to be interpreted; so whatever has been said by the GM or by the head that has to be interpreted; and after interpretation because you know all source of listening finally, will lead to a decision. Now you have to respond, and dear friends you cannot respond well unless and until you have been able to interpret you cannot interpret well unless and until you have filtered and you cannot filter well unless you have heard. And finally, once you have responded or once you have created a sort of response listening may also help in remembering. Why some people remember lots of quotations? Some people remember lots of stories, some people are always in the knowledge of lots of illusions.

So, whenever they give a speech or a talk some way or the other they will quote from different sources, how did it happen? It did not happen in a day. Have you not seen an important person, having an important portfolio and giving you data one after another, how was it possible? How did he relate that data it was only because of his proper hearing that it remembers it that in 1982 this was the scenario in 1984 the employment ratio was this, how did he come to know? This is possible only when a person treats listening as a process.

So, listening as a process has to undergo, the various stages the first among them is hearing. Then comes filtering then interpreting responding and finally, remembering. Now in order to be a good listener, what is important? Let us see what Ernest D Nathan provides us an example of a perceptive listening.

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Perceptive Listening

Perceptive listening is a conscious, cognitive effort involving primarily the sense of hearing reinforced by other senses and leading to understanding. When perceptive listening is inspired by a sincere desire to understand, it becomes more than a sensory process. It is an attitude well expressed as a listening spirit.

-- Ernest D Nathan

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When you listen do you listen with the perception, how can listening be made useful. He says perceptive listening we I will give a proper and passes, on where something is related to listening properly is a conscious, as I said conscious cognitive effort. Cognitive means in order to get some knowledge you have to be conscious.

In order to get some knowledge you have to listen very intently, involving primarily the sense of hearing reinforced by other senses. When you hear something and you try to interpret it you will find there is some reaction even in your body, from the ear it has to go to your mind. And leading to understanding this is what we mean by interpreting you

took some piece of information first you heard it then you filtered it and then you interpreted it and then finally, you are actually trying to understand and analyze it, when perceptive listening is inspired by a sincere desire I actually emphasize on a sincere desire.

So, a good listening can take place only when we are hearing something seriously. We hear no doubt, but we do not hear it sincerely, and that is why it does not become a sort of listening. A sincere desire to understand it becomes more than a sensory process. It is not only related to these senses rather it becomes a sort of attitude, well expressed as a listening a spirit. That is why you will find people who have been successful they have been. So, because they have listened well they have listen they have heard very sincerely and they have concentrated on listening.

Now this is what we call perceptive listening and in order to be successful all of us should try to create a sort of listening that can because you know you are listening, can change your perception. You know we read a lot, but we read and forget we hear a lot we hear and again forget, but when we hear a lot and we remember that is possible only because of listening.

Now, sometimes people may often think why is listening so important, what are the advantages. And can there be a listen on listening that itself means that people are not listening.

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Advantages of Listening

- Effective Listening
 - ✓ helps in learning new things
 - ✓ Establishes sound relationship
 - ✓ Enhances vocabulary
 - ✓ Avoids miscommunication

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There are advantages of listening and the advantages of listening are galore here. I can provide you some examples which appear in the form of listening as a benediction as a sort of advantage. First is that you cannot have good knowledge unless and until you are not a good listener. There are people as I said who are much averse to reading I mean they do not like to read more, you know they do not like to read more, but there are people who feel that they can also learn by listening.

Now, the lecture that I am giving and my friends are also giving. Now what is your doing my dear friends? You are listening to those lectures. And you know it will not only saves your time it also saves a sort of economy. You need not go to the market to buy you need not go to the market to spend a huge amount to get good books, but here this is one way through which by listening you garner a lot of knowledge, you gather a lot of knowledge and knowledge that also by experts by people who have actually made their mark in their own field.

So, listening actually helps in learning new things once you listen you actually feel your sensibilities fired and you want to create something new you want to deliver you want to establish and you say a system and once you listen something you know most of you once you watch a movie or you hear a song. It is it is humans who have a tendency to share at once you listen something good what you do is you actually want to make others listen and you want to go and tell them oh I actually am going to tell you something new that will really delight in you. Now this is possible only because you listened it you enjoyed it and now you are trying to expand it disseminate it to others.

So, listening is quite helpful in learning new things. Another thing that is of equal significance you know, a mother loves a child more only when the mother listens to not only the mother the parents. Even your friends you become friends only because both of you are good listeners to each other, there are certain things that match between you and him. So, listening establishes a sound relationship you will often find in the organizations also we believe and we have seen also and you will also experience that if you listen well you will perform well.

Listen to the advice of your boss, listen to the instruction of the boss, listen to what your colleagues say and you will find it will provide different sorts of ideas and that will help you work upon that will help you come out with a solution even on a particular problem

sometimes. When you are in a problem what do you do? You do not Google it out only, you also want to reach people who can provide you a sort of solution. And that is possible only when you listen to him.

So, listening and when you listen to him and it works a beautiful relationship results. So, listening helps in establishing sound relationship. Now have you ever thought of why we teachers we are actually broadening your mind which one thought or the other. And sometimes somebody may say why he is intent upon making solution everything is there in the books of course, things are there in the books, but when you listen to it there are several other things also involved you are seeing me live you know I even though I may not see you, but you are seeing me like you are seeing my expressions and this straightaway affects you, because you are listening properly, and remember well when you are listening to people especially the experts from different fields. The sort of vocabulary they use know every field has it is own vocabulary every profession will have it is own lingo.

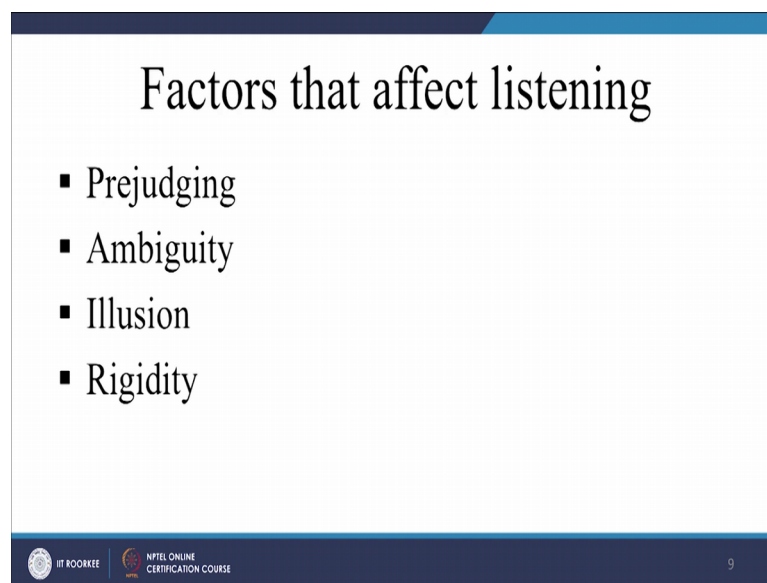
So, you also come across different words. Your vocabulary is enriched day by day, why? You will not be always with a dictionary isn't it? Suppose you come across a very difficult word you are not always carrying the dictionary, but then when you are listening to a person what he does is he use as a particular word in the particular context to the particular meaning with a particular tone with a particular pronunciation. And that way you feel that your vocabulary is improving day by day. And if you remember well people or your teachers who are great speakers most of the teachers are great speakers.

So, if you listen to their lectures carefully during the examination time, you remember their thought process as well. And suddenly the idea comes to you start remain because you had listen to carefully and all these lingos all these words which have been used because you know the meaning of the word as they were used in a particular context. Moreover, as an English teacher I can tell you that when you listen you know nowadays there are several ways of learning English through others way or that, but nowadays there are online lessons also being provided by listening to them you can also embellish you can also enhance not only your vocabulary, but your pronunciation as well and if you listen properly you cannot get confused rather while listening you have to avoid miscommunication.

Remember when a person is speaking and you as a listener listening intently you will see that you get the right context the right meaning the right word the right pronunciation the right tone the right amplitude given on a particular word. Hence there are different advantages of listening, and it is not only that you are made to listen you will find the if it if it interests as I have said that, something that interests you ought to listen. And when you listen that is going to do a lot of benefit to you.

Now, sometimes many people often complain, and you will also experience you might have experienced, that we do not listen to every lecture every talk very sincerely. Now as a speaker let us think as a speaker why I am not being listened to there are different regions. Moreover, if I am not able to listen to a particular talk, what actually are the factors that deter or that affect my listening.

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Factors that affect listening

- Prejudging
- Ambiguity
- Illusion
- Rigidity

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The first is prejudging you know many people have a tendency when they go to attend the talk or a lecture what they do is before they have listened completely they are in a way to judge, or what should he say I know a lot on this subject. Meaning there by moreover if he is speaks a particular word or a particular sentence you actually start judging you judge more than what he had said.

So, this actually will block listening. So, as a listener what you have to practice is you will not prejudge, you will not judge a person before or you have heard entirely you will not come to you know we jump to early conclusions and that actually disturbs listening.

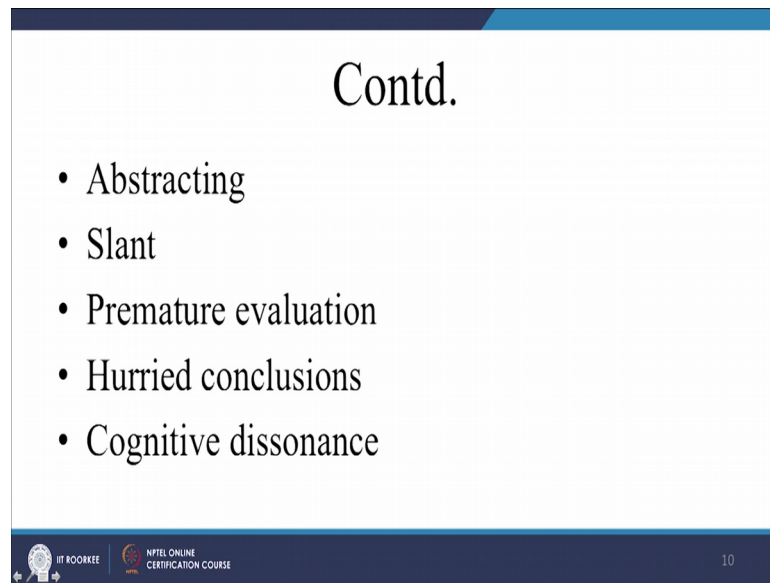
Second is ambiguity, remember a person speaking on a particular topic. Fine, and then because you expect a person especially as a speaker to be well versed, but sometimes when he speaks a particular word or when he gives a particular example or a particular piece of information where you feel or where as a speaker he is ambiguous naturally he will lose his audience and you as a listener will not listen.

So, ambiguity is one of the prime factors that also block that also effect a proper listening atmosphere. We are not able to listen to a person or to an idea that is full of ambiguity. So, when we want any other person to listen we have to be free from ambiguity; especially in terms of our ideas and in terms of our expressions. Moreover a person who is biased who is having a sort of illusion; know you sometimes suppose you go to listen to a lecture which is in the field of your interest. You have heard a lot you have rad a lot on that particular subject of course, you have a lot of knowledge you may have a lot of say exposure in that field, but when you go to listen and you are carrying that illusion you are carrying a sort of misunderstanding that you have rad a lot on that subject. There is no need to listen naturally you will not be able to listen.

So, this will once again affect listening as a process, and then there is rigidity. You know as people we have several shortcomings. And one of these shortcomings is that we are at times rigid. If a person today you might have seen when India was celebrating a sort of [FL] I mean when we had a sort of problem in terms of getting cash from ATM's and all, at that time people who are having lots of illusions. And whose way were used to talk about this process sometimes or the other he had also to face a sort of protest. Because there were many other people and there are still or many other people many of us who are under the illusion that this act will not do good. Meaning thereby we are rigid we do not want to change when we talk about the paperless office many people old timers will often say how can you think of a paperless office, but he perhaps does not know and he is not ready to listen to a talk if a talk on paperless office is being delivered.

So, once you have a sort of rigid feeling once you have a sort of rigid view, you are also not going to listen properly. Now there as other ways also people start extracting and that is why they do not listen.

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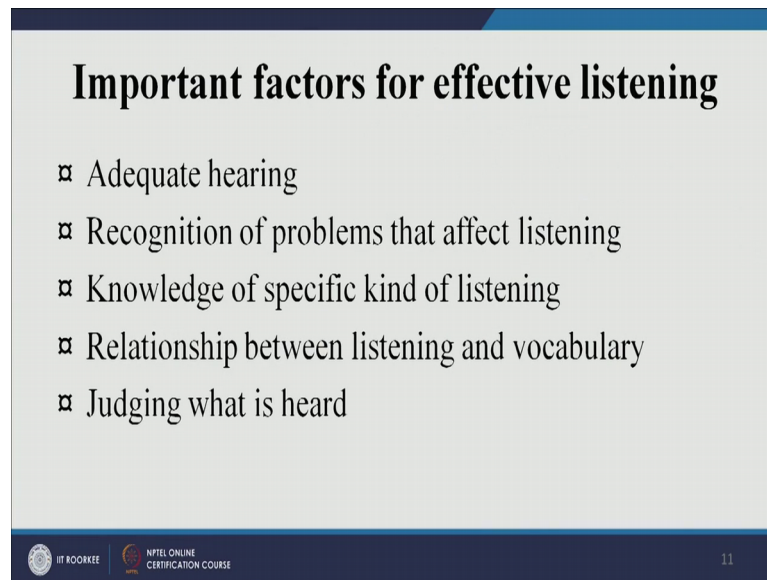
- Abstracting
- Slant
- Premature evaluation
- Hurried conclusions
- Cognitive dissonance

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Then they start evaluating things even before hand they come to early judgments and make things present in such a manner as if the speaker does not know anything, rather the need of the (Refer Time: 35:50) to have a sort of compassion for the speaker and listen to him intently perhaps something new will always come out.

And moreover when you have this agreement the need of the hour is to slant, when we talk about slant what we says sit up listen interpret and then finally, think that is how you can listen well my dear friends. In order to ensure a proper and effective listening you have to concentrate on some of the points which are being given now, one is try to hear adequately.

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Important factors for effective listening

- ❑ Adequate hearing
- ❑ Recognition of problems that affect listening
- ❑ Knowledge of specific kind of listening
- ❑ Relationship between listening and vocabulary
- ❑ Judging what is heard

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Let there be adequate hearing. If there is adequate hearing you will always be able to because whatever you hear you will try to filter it out and you will try to interpret respond and finally, remember also remember that there may be some other problems which are affecting your listening. What are those problems? We need to have a solution to those problems.

And one should also try to understand that there actually is required a specific kind of listening. When as a listener, you are listening to a talk or a lecture you need to see you need to regard the speaker as a person who has come here with lots of years of experience and who has an expertise in his field at least for the sake of humanity let us try to listen and once you start listening as a process you will not be able to judge whatever is heard; judge people not on the basis of their appearance, but on the basis of their thoughts, what sometimes happen is people start judging people simply on the basis of their appearances and making premature evaluations that whatever he says will simply be a jungle of words having no substance at all.

Dear friends listening requires a sort of patience and patience not only pays patience prevails. Let us try to listen let us try to be patient because you never know what is there. In a store the store is always full it is full of knowledge we need to extract that knowledge and that is possible only by listening carefully. Hope you have listened me well.

Thank you very much.