

# ▲ Listening ▲

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**Objectives:** LEAD participants will be able to listen in an effective manner. If they cannot yet, they will know how to move in that direction.

**Plan ahead:**

- Time required: 65 min
- Arrange the chairs in a circle
- Copy and cut up the response cards (Page 5 of this file)

**Before this lesson, LEADs must:**

- Review the Communication Article

**Supplies:**

- Newsprint or white board and pens
- Bible with Esther 7 bookmarked

**Accompanying documents:**

- Listening Handout (should be in LEADs' binders, Page 6-7 of this file)
- Listening Observation (Page 8 of this file)
- Listening Self-observation (Page 9 of this file)

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Notes: Before you start, ask them about the planning exercise and how the communication went for that. Ask if they used some of the commandments as they planned and if the commandments helped.

❖ **Get Started (hook, 15 min)**

Play "Allow Me to Introduce." Have LEADs pair up with someone they don't know well. Have them sit in a circle, beside their partner.

Give partners 2 minutes to find out interesting things about each other. Then have LEADs introduce their partners to the whole group, mentioning as many things as they can remember.

Once everyone is done, ask some evaluation questions. Get a few answers, but don't put anyone on the spot. Give positive feedback. Steer them toward realizing the value of listening well. Questions to ask:

- When you spoke to your partner, what things about her told you that she was listening to you? (Gestures, posture, return questions, looking at you, etc)
- Was there anything your partner said about you that somehow got mis-communicated? That is, you don't think you said that, but she said it when she introduced you?
- Do you think you remembered everything your partner told you?
- What could you do to listen better next time?

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, 45 min)**

- **Why is it important to learn to listen well?** (Affirm the answers you get.)
- How does it make you feel when someone doesn't really listen to you? (Bad.)
- Is listening important for communication? (Of course.)

Let's read a little more in our Communication Article. You don't need to take it out, just listen (smile).

### ***Communication - the Tool of Leadership***

[After talking about how communication is essential to teamwork, which we talked about the other day, the article goes on to say,]

*For communication to be effective, the role of the sender and receiver must switch frequently. After receiving a message, the listener acknowledges the message by providing feedback. Feedback can be send verbally or non-verbally. ...Because people listen to leaders who listen to them, you must work hard at listening to your team. Effective communication implies that your team listens to and understands you. Becoming a skilled listener is hard work and takes constant practice. (S300Extended Incident Attack Commander, version 1.0, 2007)*

From Camp Cedarbrook's Leadership Training teaches that, *Listening builds [a person's] self-esteem by communicating. "I think you're worthwhile person," "I respect your point of view," and so on. For [those you work with] to develop confidence in their ideas, they need opportunities to express their deepest feelings to people who matter to them and who listen in a nonjudgmental way. Leaders skilled at listening can leave [people] feeling, "I'm all right; I count. If my leaders listen to me, I can risk talking to other people, too."*

(Summary) Open your notebooks to the Listening Handout and let's review. What are some of the reasons listening is important? (Fill in the blanks as you review.)

#### **WHY listen well:**

Listening well builds the speaker's SELF-ESTEEM.

Listening well builds people's TRUST in you.

Listening well builds your TEAM.

Listening well encourages further COMMUNICATION.

So we agree listening is important. But is listening biblical? (Get some answers, see if they know the verse) **Jas 1:19**  
*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear [or listen], slow to speak, slow to anger...*

So it's important and it's biblical. **HOW** do we do it well? **HOW do we listen well?** You already recognize good listening so you are going to help compile a list of ways to listen better.

LEARNING TASK (30 min): (Big picture: For this exercise, one person will play Esther pleading for her life, **Esther 7:3-4**, the other will play the role of the king and respond to her plea. There are 12 responses. If you have 12 LEADs, then the each get to do both roles (read and respond). If you have fewer people, drop out some of the examples. If you have more, some get to only play one role.

After each LEAD reads the "communication," ask the speaker how she felt and why - did she feel heard? Why or why not? It is best if these are done humorously. For each response, there is one aspect of listening that should be highlighted. So as the LEADs comment on what didn't go so well, build a list of the four areas of listening: eye contact, posture, personal space, verbal feedback. See the list below. Ideally, when you have finished the last interchange, you will have the list below.)

We'll do a little exercise. I'll give each of our "listeners" a card with a response on it. In pairs, one read the communication, the other respond as your card says. On most cards, something is highlighted in **bold**. Exaggerate the part that is in **bold**. Make it obvious. Try to make it funny or even sort of ridiculous. (If you need to organize differently, explain it to the LEADs. \*\*Don't handout the B1 or G1 cards yet! These are the examples of Bad and Good listening. You'll use them later, for humor and for summary.\*\*)

When you are done, we'll talk about the listener's response - what we liked and what we didn't. We'll collect our thoughts up on the board. When all the responses are done, we'll make sense of our observations in a way that will be useful to us and help us learn to be better listeners.

(After each interchange ask questions like the following:)

- What did [the listener] do well?

- What could she improve?

- (To the speaker) How did you feel? Was [the listener] listening to you?

- Would you share more with her?

(As you get responses to the exercise, build this list on your newsprint or board. On the top, left corner of each card is which area each listener is supposed to highlight. For example, E1 and E2 highlight eye contact errors.)

Eye contact -	Staring, too much eye contact Good, looking at eyes, but not staring Looking away
Posture -	Open, receptive Closed, turned away
Personal space -	Too close Good Too far away
Verbal feedback -	Unrelated - shows you are not listening Interrupt - shows you are not listening Good, reflective, shows understanding & interest Judgmental - puts down the speaker

Open your notebooks to your Listening Handout again. Let's go through when we've discovered about listening and organize our findings while we fill in the blanks. (Use the list above and your answer key to fill in the blanks on their Handouts.)

Now that we have our lists of good and bad listening choices, let's take a look at them in action. (Hand out the B1 and G1 cards to LEADs with strong acting skills.)

Let's start with what we do NOT want to do when we listen. (Read the communication to the LEAD with the B1 card.)

- Look at your "DON'T" column. What did she do? (Highlight some of the main, most common listening challenges.)
- (Ask the speaker) How did her listening make you feel?

That was NOT good. Now let's look at GOOD listening. (Read the communication to the LEAD with the G1 card.)

- What did this listener do WELL? (Highlight some of the main, most important aspects of GOOD listening.)
- (Ask the speaker) How did her listening make you feel?

Great. We've learned some choices and actions we can do to listener better. But there's still one thing we have not talked about. Any guesses? (Give them a chance to guess that what remains to be discussed is *what goes on inside the listener's head*. Give them some hints:)

- What do you have to do in order to give good verbal feedback?
- When a listener is looking elsewhere, what does it tell the speaker she is doing? Yes, she's NOT listening, but what IS she doing?

THINKING! Yes, much of the non-verbal and verbal feedback we get is telling us what the listener is THINKING. So as a listener, what do you need to be doing *inside your head*?

(Fill in the blanks in the DO column as you get answers that are close to "FOCUS on what is being said.") Of course it is natural for lots of thoughts to come along as we listen to the speaker. In order to focus, we need to push those other thoughts out, or as the Bible says, "Take every thought captive." Either push it back out entirely, or lock it up in jail for later. But don't let it occupy your thoughts, or else you'll end up slipping onto the "DON'T" column.

There's a little more detail on taking thoughts captive if you look on the "DON'T" side of the THINK row. (Briefly review those.) Practicing some of the other "DO's" of listening will also help with this.

### ❖ Get Practical (took, 5 min)

Is listening well *easy*? Absolutely not. Really listening, and listening well, is *exhausting*!

Let's hear one final quote that takes listening to another level: Scott Cormode of Fuller Seminary notes, *"...Leadership begins with listening. When people in the organization feel their voice has been heard, their buy-in to the vision increases dramatically." When a leader listens to others, he or she will often hear God speaking as well. Discerning God's direction in community is an important part of the culture Willow Creek...confidence that God will speak with one voice among the community of leaders...a Spirit-led clarity emerges...*

You have some guidelines to get you started in the right direction. Look at the list of "DO's". Pick one that you think would help your listening skills the most. Maybe as we've been talking you realize that you tend to slouch or turn away slightly because you're shy. Maybe you could work on facing the speaker squarely and looking at them. Maybe you realize you are putting together your reply while the speaker is still talking. You could work on focusing on what they are saying. Look through the "DO's" and underline or highlight one to work on.

### ❖ Homework (follow up assignment)

Over the next couple days, take note of how people listen to you, and how you listen to others. You have 2 Worksheets in your notebook on Listening. One is a self-observation of two listening incidents. The other is two observations of another person's listening to you. These don't need to be long, in-depth conversations, but should be more than a passing comment or two. You can use conversations that happen in an activity, at Bible Ex, at a meal or elsewhere.

Fill out these two pages and hand them in to the LEAD coordinator by this time on Wednesday (the day after the Solitude exercise, which is the next thing on the syllabus).

## ▲ Listening Exercise ▲

<p>B1  <b>Look around the room</b>  <b>Slouch and fidget</b>  <b>Turn slightly away from the speaker</b>  <b>Stand far back from the speaker</b>  <b>Say nothing</b></p>	<p>PS1  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  <b>Stand very close to the speaker; when she moves away wait a moment then move toward her</b>  Nod occasionally and ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>
<p>E1  <b>Look mostly at the speaker's clothes and glance occasionally at her eyes</b>  Stand facing speaker with arms calm  Stand not too close and not too far from the speaker  Ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>	<p>PS2  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with arms calmly crossed  <b>Stand far from speaker; if she moves toward you, move away immediately and abruptly</b>  Nod occasionally and ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>
<p>E2  <b>Stare at the speaker's eyes as if to see into her brain</b>  Stand facing speaker and lean slightly forward as if to see even better  Stand close enough but not too close  Nod occasionally and ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>	<p>F1  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  Stand close enough but not too close  <b>Say nothing. When the speaker finishes, wait for a long, uncomfortable moment to pass, then ask a totally unrelated question</b></p>
<p>P1  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  <b>Stand slightly sideways to speaker with your arms crossed</b>  Stand close enough but not too close  Nod occasionally and ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>	<p>F2  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  Stand close enough but not too close  <b>Nod and say "um hum," "yeah," "totally understand" almost non-stop as the speaker talks. When she finishes, continue to comment on how you understand and have been there...</b></p>
<p>P2  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  <b>Move constantly as if you are uncomfortable, scratch imaginary itches, fidget, move from one foot to the other</b>  Stand close enough but not too close  Nod occasionally and ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>	<p>F3  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  Stand close enough but not too close  Nod occasionally to show you are listening  <b>When the speaker finishes, tell her how she really shouldn't feel that way, or shouldn't feel how she does</b></p>
<p>F4  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  Stand close enough but not too close  <b>As soon as you think you know what the speaker will say, interrupt to finish her sentences or ask a question or make a counter point</b></p>	<p>G1  Maintain good but not overwhelming eye contact  Stand facing speaker with a listening attitude  Stand close enough but not too close  Ask a question or make a comment to show you understand and want to know more</p>

# ▲ Listening Handout ▲

Answer key

## WHY listen well:

Listening well builds the speaker's SELF-ESTEEM.

Listening well builds people's TRUST in you.

Listening well builds your TEAM.

Listening well encourages further COMMUNICATION.

## HOW to listen well:

	<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<b>Eye contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at speaker's <u>EYES</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look around the room, or elsewhere on them</li> <li>• <u>STARE</u> them down</li> </ul>
<b>Posture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>OPEN</u>, relaxed</li> <li>• Face them as <u>SQUARELY</u> as possible</li> <li>• Lean slightly toward them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross your arms</li> <li>• <u>FIDGET</u></li> <li>• Face sideways or away</li> </ul>
<b>Personal space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit or stand comfortably close</li> <li>• <u>ADJUST</u> to <i>their</i> comfort level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit/stand too <u>CLOSE</u></li> <li>• Sit/stand too <u>FAR</u></li> </ul>
<b>Nonverbal feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nod occasionally</li> <li>• Change <u>FACIAL</u> expression as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the drinking <u>DUCK</u> (nod constantly)</li> <li>• Be deadpan: show no expression at all</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal feedback*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond in ways that are <u>SUPPORTIVE</u> and show thought</li> <li>• Validate (agree with) the <u>IDEAS</u> and feelings they have expressed</li> <li>• Ask questions that show <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> and dig deeper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>INTERRUPT</u> (it shows you are not listening)</li> <li>• Immediately <u>CHANGE</u> the subject when they finish</li> <li>• Say nothing at all in response</li> </ul>
<b>Think...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>FOCUS</u> on what they are saying</li> <li>• "Take every <u>THOUGHT</u> captive" (2Cor 10:5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>THINK</u> about other things</li> <li>• <u>THINK</u> about your reply / rebuttal</li> <li>• <u>JUDGE</u> / refute them in your head</li> </ul>

\*Ideas for supportive, understanding verbal feedback:

- I see why you feel that way... If you could change this situation, what would you like it to look like?

- Wow, that's a very interesting idea. Can we talk about it some more?

- (Responding to another person's non-verbal communication) You look sad (upset, etc). What's the matter?

# ▲ Listening Handout ▲

## WHY listen well:

Listening well builds the speaker's \_\_\_\_\_.

Listening well builds people's \_\_\_\_\_ in you.

Listening well builds your \_\_\_\_\_.

Listening well encourages further \_\_\_\_\_.

## HOW to listen well:

	<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<b>Eye contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at speaker's _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look around the room, or elsewhere on them</li> <li>• _____ them down</li> </ul>
<b>Posture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____, relaxed</li> <li>• Face them as _____ as possible</li> <li>• Lean slightly toward them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross your arms</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• Face sideways or away</li> </ul>
<b>Personal space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit or stand comfortably close</li> <li>• _____ to <i>their</i> comfort level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit/stand too _____</li> <li>• Sit/stand too _____</li> </ul>
<b>Nonverbal feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nod occasionally</li> <li>• Change _____ expression as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the drinking _____ (nod constantly)</li> <li>• Be deadpan: show no expression at all</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal feedback*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond in ways that are _____ and show thought</li> <li>• Validate (agree with) the _____ and feelings they have expressed</li> <li>• Ask questions that show _____ and dig deeper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____ (it shows you are not listening)</li> <li>• Immediately _____ the subject when they finish</li> <li>• Say nothing at all in response</li> </ul>
<b>Think...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____ on what they are saying</li> <li>• "Take every _____ captive" (2Cor 10:5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____ about other things</li> <li>• _____ about your reply / rebuttal</li> <li>• _____ / refute them in your head</li> </ul>

\*Ideas for supportive, understanding verbal feedback:

- I see why you feel that way... If you could change this situation, what would you like it to look like?
- Wow, that's a very interesting idea. Can we talk about it some more?
- (Responding to another person's non-verbal communication) You look sad (upset, etc). What's the matter?

# ▲ Listening Observation ▲

Activity/Event 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways did this person listen well?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How might her listening have been improved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did you feel as a result of this interaction?

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Activity/Event 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways did this person listen well?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How might her listening have been improved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did you feel as a result of this interaction?

# ▲ Listening Self-observation ▲

Activity/Event 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways do I think I listened well?

2. How do I think the speaker felt as a result of this interaction?

3. What might I do done differently next time?

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Activity/Event 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways do I think I listened well?

2. How do I think the speaker felt as a result of this interaction?

3. What might I do done differently next time?