

# BEST QUOTES ON LISTENING

It is impossible to overemphasize the immense need human beings have to be really listened to.

--Paul Tournier

Being listened to and heard is one of the greatest desires of the human heart. And those who learn to listen are the most loved and respected.

—Richard Carlson

The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.

—Henry David Thoreau

You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.

—M. Scott Peck

A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.

--Wilson Mizner

Highly effective people spend an inordinate amount of time and energy listening.

—Stephen R. Covey

Listening and empathy is one of the highest forms of intelligent behavior.

--Arthur L. Costa

Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don't listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what's behind the words.

—Roy T. Bennett

One of the issues I kept saying to my students is you have to learn to interrupt. When you raise your hand at a meeting, by the time they get to you, the point is not germane. So the bottom line is active listening. If you are going to interrupt, you look for opportunities. You have to know what you're talking about.

—Madeleine Albright

The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention

—Richard Moss

We think we listen, but very rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know.

—Carl Rogers

When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.

—Dalai Lama

I think the one lesson I have learned is that there is no substitute for paying attention.

—Diane Sawyer

If you want to hear everything, keep both eyes open.

--Unknown

To listen well is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well.

--Chinese Proverb

I have often regretted my speech, never my silence.

--Publius Syrus

The reason why we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may listen the more and talk the less.

--Zeno of Citium

Wit is necessary to a clever talker; intelligence is enough for a good listener.

--André Gide

Don't talk unless you can improve the silence

--Vermont Proverb

It takes a great man to make a good listener.

--Sir Arthur Helps

A man who listens because he has nothing to say can hardly be a source of inspiration. The only listening that counts is that of the talker who alternately absorbs and expresses ideas.

--Agnes Repplier

While the right to talk may be the beginning of freedom, the necessity of listening is what makes the right important.

--Walter Lippmann

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward, and we want to sit in their radius. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.

--Karl Menninger

Nature has given to men one tongue, but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak.

--Epictetus

Sometimes it is a great joy just to listen to someone we love talking.

--Vincent McNabb

So when you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not part of it.

—Jiddu Krishnamurti

A good listener tries to understand thoroughly what the other person is saying. In the end he may disagree sharply, but before he disagrees, he wants to know exactly what it is he is disagreeing with.

--Kenneth A. Wells

When we talk about understanding, surely it takes place only when the mind listens completely—the mind being your heart, your nerves, your ears—when you give your whole attention to it.

--J. Krishnamurti

None so deaf as he that will not hear.

--Thomas Fuller

When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.

--Ernest Hemingway

Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly.

--Plutarch

From listening comes wisdom, and from speaking repentance.

--Italian Proverb

A good listener is a silent flatterer.

--Unknown

In the young, silence is better than speech.

--Greek Proverb

No one cares to speak to an unwilling listener. An arrow never lodges in a stone: often it recoils upon the sender of it.

--St. Jerome

If you are not a charming conversationalist, you may still be a big hit as a charmed listener.

—Alan Zimmerman

The courage to speak must be matched by the wisdom to listen.

--Charles E. McKenzie

You can win more friends with your ears than with your mouth.

--Harvey Mackay

The Golden Rule of friendship is to listen to others as you would have them listen to you.

--David W Augsburg

Silence never makes any blunders.

--Josh Billings

Listening...pays dividends....One often hears the remark 'He talks too much,' but when did anyone last hear the criticism 'He listens too much?'

--Norman R. Augustine

Bore, n. a person who talks when you wish him to listen.

--Ambrose Bierce

Silence is one great art of conversation.

--William Hazlitt

A man may see how this world goes with no eyes.  
Look with thine ears.

--William Shakespeare

Do you wish people to speak well of you? Then do not speak at all yourself.

--Pascal

Men trust their ears less than their eyes.

--Herodotus

All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the senses.

--Nietzsche

What can give us surer knowledge than our senses? With what else can we better distinguish the true from the false?

--Lucretius

Nature, which gave us two eyes to see, and two ears to hear, has given us but one tongue to speak.

--Jonathan Swift

I have never been hurt by anything I didn't say.

--Calvin Coolidge

In free countries, every man is entitled to express his opinions and every other man is entitled not to listen.

--G. Norman Collie

I am not so much concerned with the right of everyone to say anything he pleases as I am about our need as self-governing people to hear everything relevant.

--John F. Kennedy

Nothing is more like a wise man than a fool who holds his tongue.

--St. Francis de Sales

The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them.

--Kin Hubbard

People love to talk but hate to listen. Listening is not merely not talking, though even that is beyond most of our powers; it means taking a vigorous, human interest in what is being told us. You can listen like a blank wall or like a splendid auditorium where every sound comes back fuller and richer.

--Alice Duer Miller

One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears—by listening to them.

--Dean Rusk

If people listened to themselves more often, they'd talk less.

--John Peers and  
Gordon Bennett

Do more than hear, listen.

Do more than listen, understand.

--John H. Rhoades

The foundation of understanding is the willingness to listen.

--Lucy MacDonald

Listening is the beginning of understanding. ... Wisdom is the reward for a lifetime of listening. Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance.

—*Proverbs 1:5*

Kind, loving words seldom go in one ear and out the other.

--Unknown

If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand..., extraordinary things begin to happen.

--Loretta Girzartis

If you listen you will double your charisma.

--David Niven

Know or listen to those who know.

--Balthasar Gracian

You ain't learnin' nothin' when you're doin' all the talkin'.

--Lyndon Baines Johnson

The opposite of talking isn't listening. The opposite of talking is waiting.  
--Fran Lebowitz

Everyone hears only what he understands.  
--Goethe

I have noticed that nothing I never said ever did me any harm.  
--Calvin Coolidge

There is only one rule for being a good talker—learn how to listen.  
--Christopher Morley

An unnamed Alabama public school pupil told his teacher he didn't join in a classroom discussion because: 'I think I will learn more by listening. Anything I would say, I already know.'  
--*Detroit Free Press*

You can't fake listening. It shows.  
--Raquel Welch

No man would listen to you talk if he didn't know his turn was next.  
--Ed Howe

A wise old owl sat on an oak;  
The more he saw the less he spoke;  
The less he spoke the more he heard;  
Why aren't we like that wise old bird?  
--Edward H. Richards

An inability to stay quiet is one of the conspicuous failings of mankind.  
--Walter Bagehot

Poor listening costs business somewhere between one and two-and-one half billion dollars a year. Approximately 200,000,000 phone calls are made daily: but only 1 person in 10 is a good listener.  
--Kenneth M. Frawley

If you can't get people to listen to you any other way, tell them it's confidential.  
--*Farmer's Digest*

There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to say themselves.

--Albert Guinon

To listen closely and reply well is the highest perfection we are able to attain in the art of conversation.

—Francois de La  
Rochefoucauld

Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.

--Dr. Joyce Brothers

How can we communicate love? I think three things are involved: We must reach out to a person, make contact. We must listen with the heart, be sensitive to the other's needs. We must respond in a language that the person can understand. Many of us do all the talking. We must learn to listen and to keep on listening.

--Princess Pale Moon

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.

--Peter Drucker

The first step in getting ahead is to listen.

--Liam Strong

One must talk little, and listen much.

--Mauritanian Proverb

A man admires a woman not for what she says, but for what she listens to.

--George Jean Nathan

No siren did ever so charm the ear of the listener, as the listening ear has charmed the soul of the siren.

--Henry Taylor

Adolescents sometimes say... 'My friends listen to me, but my parents only hear me talk.' Often they are right. Familiarity breeds inattention.

--Laurence Steinberg

Freedom not to listen is sometimes even more precious a right than freedom of speech.

--Unknown



A good listener is usually thinking about something else.

--Kin Hubbard

Another way to be popular is to listen attentively to a lot of things you already know.

--Unknown

The surest way a man can make his wife listen is by talking to another woman.

--Unknown

If nature intended us to talk more than listen, she would have given us two mouths and one ear.

--Unknown

A wedding is a ceremony at which a man chooses the woman he wants to spend his life listening to.

--Unknown

Women are smarter than men because they listen.

--Phil Donahue

You have to be willing sometimes to listen to some remarkable bad opinions. Because if you say to someone, "That's the silliest thing I've ever heard; get on out of here!"—then you'll never get anything out of that person again, and you might as well have a puppet on a string or a robot.

—John Bryan

Silence is a source of great strength.

—Lao Tzu

An actor's a guy who if you ain't talkin' about him, ain't listening.

—Marlon Brando

We should never pretend to know what we don't know, we should not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below, and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lowest levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders.

—Mao Tse-tung

A yawn is nature's method of giving the person listening to a bore an opportunity to open his mouth.

--Unknown

The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.

—Ralph Nichols

Effective listeners remember that 'words have no meaning—people have meaning.' The assignment of meaning to a term is an internal process; meaning comes from inside us. And although our experiences, knowledge and attitudes differ, we often misinterpret each other's messages while under the illusion that a common understanding has been achieved.

—Larry Barker

It's a rare person who wants to hear what he doesn't want to hear.

—Dick Cavett

I'll defend to the death your right to say that, but I never said I'd listen to it!

—Tom Galloway

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

—Hubert Humphrey

One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody's listening.

—Franklin P. Jones

Just because I didn't do what you told me, doesn't mean I wasn't listening to you!

—Hank Ketcham

One friend, one person who is truly understanding, who takes the trouble to listen to us as we consider a problem, can change our whole outlook on the world.

—Dr. E. H. Mayo

There is no such thing as a worthless conversation, provided you know what to listen for. And questions are the breath of life for a conversation.

—James Nathan Miller

It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

There's a big difference between showing interest and really taking interest.  
—Michael P. Nichols

Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. Every head is a world.  
—Cuban Proverb

Man's inability to communicate is a result of his failure to listen effectively.  
—Carl Rogers

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.  
—Winston Churchill

If speaking is silver, then listening is gold.  
—Turkish Proverb

To listen fully means to pay close attention to what is being said beneath the words. You listen not only to the 'music,' but to the essence of the person speaking. You listen not only for what someone knows, but for what he or she is. Ears operate at the speed of sound, which is far slower than the speed of light the eyes take in. Generative listening is the art of developing deeper silences in yourself, so you can slow our mind's hearing to your ears' natural speed, and hear beneath the words to their meaning.

—Peter Senge

Big egos have little ears.  
—Robert Schuller

To be listened to is, generally speaking, a nearly unique experience for most people. It is enormously stimulating. It is small wonder that people who have been demanding all their lives to be heard so often fall speechless when confronted with one who gravely agrees to lend an ear. Man clamors for the freedom to express himself and for knowing that he counts. But once offered these conditions, he becomes frightened.

—Robert C. Murphy

Wisdom is the reward for a lifetime of listening ... when you'd have preferred to talk.

—Doug Larson

Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much.

—Robert Greenleaf

The best time to hold your tongue is the time you feel you must say something or bust.

—Josh Billings

An essential part of true listening is the discipline of bracketing, the temporary giving up or setting aside of one's own prejudices, frames of reference and desires so as to experience as far as possible the speaker's world from the inside, step in inside his or her shoes. This unification of speaker and listener is actually an extension and enlargement of ourselves, and new knowledge is always gained from this. Moreover, since true listening involves bracketing, a setting aside of the self, it also temporarily involves a total acceptance of the other. Sensing this acceptance, the speaker will feel less and less vulnerable and more and more inclined to open up the inner recesses of his or her mind to the listener. As this happens, speaker and listener begin to appreciate each other more and more, and the duet dance of love is begun again.

—M. Scott Peck, M.D.

I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen. Business people need to listen at least as much as they need to talk. Too many people fail to realize that real communication goes in both directions.

—Lee Iacocca

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

—Stephen R. Covey

To say that a person feels listened to means a lot more than just their ideas get heard. It's a sign of respect. It makes people feel valued.

—Deborah Tannen

June Rokoff, Senior VP for Software Development at Lotus credits her success in turning around the company's position in the software industry to building a team that listens: she made listening the culture of her team.

—Glen Rifkin

The best salespeople are great listeners—that's how you find out what the buyer wants.

—Larry Wilson and  
Spencer Johnson

Just being available and attentive is a great way to use listening as a management tool. Some employees will come in, talk for twenty minutes, and leave having solved their problems entirely by themselves

—Nicholas V. Lippa

I would say that listening to the other person's emotions may be the most important thing I've learned in twenty years of business.

—Heath Herber

Of all the skills of leadership, listening is the most valuable—and one of the least understood. Most captains of industry listen only sometimes, and they remain ordinary leaders. But a few, the great ones, never stop listening. That's how they get word before anyone else of unseen problems and opportunities.

—Peter Nulty

Without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of others are never captured.

—John P. Kotter

A good listener tries to understand what the other person is saying. In the end he may disagree sharply, but because he disagrees, he wants to know exactly what it is he is disagreeing with.

—Kenneth A. Wells

We listened to what our customers wanted and acted on what they said. Good things happen when you pay attention.

—John F. Smith

The saddest part about being human is not paying attention. Presence is the gift of life.

—Stephen Levine

The way to stay fresh is you never stop traveling, you never stop listening. You never stop asking people what they think.

—Rene McPherson

Who speaks, sows; Who listens, reaps.

—Argentine Proverb

I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening.

—Larry King

We do not grow by knowing all of the answers, but rather by living with the questions.

—Max De Pree

We should never pretend to know what we don't know, we should not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below, and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lowest levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders.

—MaoTse-tung

You learn when you listen. You earn when you listen—not just money, but respect.

—Harvey Mackay

To learn through listening, practice it naively and actively. Naively means that you listen openly, ready to learn something, as opposed to listening defensively, ready to rebut. Listening actively means you acknowledge what you heard and act accordingly.

—Betsy Sanders

The key to success is to get out into the store and listen to what the associates have to say. It's terribly important for everyone to get involved. Our best ideas come from clerks and stockboys.

—Sam Walton

Many 'active listening' seminars are, in actuality, little more than a shallow theatrical exercise in appearing like you're paying attention to another person. The requirements: Lean forward, make eye contact, nod, grunt, or murmur to demonstrate you're awake and paying attention, and paraphrase something back every 30 seconds or so. As one executive I know wryly observed, many inhabitants of the local zoo could be trained to go through these motions, minus the paraphrasing.

—Robert K. Cooper

God gave us two ears but only one mouth. Some people say that's because He wanted us to spend twice as much time listening as talking. Others claim it's because He knew that listening was twice as hard.

--Grant M. Bright

You earn the right to speak by listening.

--Unknown

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.

--Doug Larsen

While listening may be the most undervalued of all the communication skills, good people managers are likely to listen more than they speak. Perhaps that's why God gave us two ears and only one mouth.

--Mary Kay Ash

Silences regulate the flow of listening and talking. They are to conversation what zeroes are to mathematics—crucial nothings without which communication can't work.

--Gerald Goodman

The word 'listen' contains the same letters as 'silent.'

--Alfred Brendel

Every person I work with knows something better than me. My job is to listen long enough to find it and use it.

--Jack Nichols

No man ever listened himself out of a job.

--Calvin Coolidge

A major portion of what we think we just heard is the product of our imagination.

-- Barbara Ann Kipfer

Whoever listens most usually controls the situation.

--Veronique Vienne

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.

--Doug Larson

There are many benefits to this process of listening. The first is that good listeners are created as people feel listened to. Listening is a reciprocal process—we become more attentive to others if they have attended to us.

--Margaret J. Wheatley

When I ask you to listen to me  
And you start giving advice  
You have not done what I asked.  
Listen! All I asked was that you listen.  
Not talk or do—just hear me.  
Advice is cheap: A quarter will get you both Dear  
Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper.  
And I can do for myself. I'm not helpless.  
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless....  
So please, listen and just hear me, and, if you want to talk,  
Wait a minute for your turn; and I'll listen to you.

--Unknown

To get 'em listening, get 'em laughing.

--Allen Klein

Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble.

--Frank Tyger

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.

--William Shakespeare

The ear is the road to the heart.

--Voltaire

The first duty of love is to listen.

--Paul Tillich

Listen to others. Even the dull and ignorant. They too have their stories.

--Max Ehrmann

The most important thing to do is really listen.

--Itzhak Perlman

The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

—Ram Dass

Listen to many, speak to a few.

--William Shakespeare



It is a great thing to know the season for speech and the season for silence.  
--Seneca

Listening to people keeps them entertained.  
--Mason Cooley

If you want to be listened to, you should put in time listening.  
—Marge Piercy

Silence is only frightening to people who are compulsively verbalizing.  
—William S. Burroughs

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.  
—Doug Larson

Husbands are the best people to share secrets with. They'll never tell anyone because they really aren't listening anyway.  
—Unknown

Silence is better than bullshit.  
—Tracy Smith

The most profound statements are often said in silence.  
—Lynn Johnston

Isn't it funny that we are not formally trained to listen, which might be one of the great journeys in life, to truly hear each other?  
—Major Jackson

Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The hearer is an indispensable partner.  
—John Dewey

You have to do a lot of listening; you don't just learn out of yourself.  
—Ruggiero Ricci

Spoken words account for 30-to-35 percent of meaning. The rest is transmitted through nonverbal communication.  
—*International Listening Association*

Silence is a source of great strength.

—Lao Tzu

Everyone hears what you say. Friends listen to what you say. Best friends listen to what you don't say.

—Unknown

Be careful who you vent to. A listening ear can also be a running mouth.

—Dr. Laura

Effective listening is more than simply avoiding the bad habit of interrupting others while they are speaking or finishing their sentences. It's being content to listen to the entire thought of someone rather than waiting impatiently for your chance to respond.

—Richard Carlson

I'm not hard of hearing. I've just heard enough.

—*Facebook.com / Maxine*

Real listening is all about feelings.

—Robin Grille

Women like silent men. They think they're listening.

—Marcel Achard

A man admires a woman not for what she says, but what she listens to.

—George Jean Nathan

The phone improved our social behavior because it forced a listener to pay closer attention to a speaker.

—Clive Thompson

93.6% of my life is spent telling people something I have already told them at least once.

—Ged Backland

Listening is a form of accepting.

—Stella Terrill Mann

Often we do a greater amount of good when we 'listen' to our students than when we 'teach' them.

—Robert John Meehan

Once you get people laughing, they're listening.

—Herbert Gardner

We cannot let another person into our hearts or minds unless we empty ourselves. We can truly listen to him or truly hear her only out of emptiness.

—M. Scott Peck

No one is listening until you make a mistake.

—Unknown

Never miss a good chance to shut up.

—Will Rogers

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.

—Bryant McGill

Listening and following directions—vital prerequisites to learning.

—Gladys Andrews  
Fleming

Nothing improves a student's hearing more than praise.

—Unknown

The situation of our youth is not mysterious. Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. They must; they have no other models.

--James Baldwin

Listen to the MUSTN'TS,  
Listen to the DON'TS,  
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS,  
Listen to the NEVER HAVES,  
Then listen close to me.  
Anything can happen, child,  
ANYTHING can be.

--Shel Silverstein

The real focus in the preschool years should be not just on vocabulary and reading, but on talking and listening. We forget how vital spontaneous, unstructured conversation is to young children's understanding. By talking with adults, and one another, they pick up information. They learn how things work. They solve puzzles that trouble them. Sometimes, to be fair, what children take away from a conversation is wrong. They might conclude, as my young son did, that pigs produce ham, just as chickens produce eggs and cows produce milk. But these understandings are worked over, refined, and adapted—as when a brutal older sibling explains a ham sandwich's grisly origins.

—Erika Christakis

Don't worry that children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you.

—Robert Fulghum

Patience is a most necessary quality...: many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request.

—Earl of Chesterfield

I believe I know why it is satisfying to me to hear someone. When I can really hear someone, it puts me in touch with him; it enriches my life. It is through hearing people that I have learned all that I know about individuals, about personality, about interpersonal relationships.

—Carl Rogers

When you stop learning, stop listening, stop looking and asking questions, always new questions, then it is time to die.

--Lillian Smith

To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a special heart that listens.

—Unknown

Everyone likes to think that he has done reasonably well in life, so that it comes as a shock to find our children believing differently. The temptation is to tune them out; it takes much more courage to listen.

--John D. Rockefeller III

If a woman speaks and no one is listening, chances are her name is Mom.

—Ged Backland

If we want kids to talk to us, we should listen when they do....How much they open up depends a lot on how well we listen up.

--Dr. Thomas Lickona

Babies cannot and do not manipulate; they communicate. Listen.

—L. R. Knost

Sometimes all a person wants is an empathetic ear; all he or she needs is to talk it out. Just offering a listening ear and an understanding heart for his or her suffering can be a big comfort.

—Roy T. Bennett

Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking.

—Bernard Baruch

The only valid censorship of ideas is the right of people not to listen

--Tom Smothers

The formulation of a public relations strategy properly begins with listening, not talking

—Leonard Saffir

The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard.

--William Hazlitt

The reason why so few people are agreeable in conversation, is, that each is thinking more of what he is intending to say, than of what others are saying; and we never listen when we are planning to speak.

--Rochefoucauld

The talkative listen to no one, for they are ever speaking. and the first evil that attends those who know not how to be silent, is, that they hear nothing.

—Plutarch

An inability to stay quiet...is one of the most conspicuous failures of mankind.

--Walter Bagehot

When a woman is talking to you, listen to what she says with her eyes.

--Victor Hugo

The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard.

--William Hazlitt

If you wish to know the mind of a man, listen to his words.

--Johann Wolfgang von  
Goethe

When I die I hope it is during a lecture. The transition from life to death will be so slight it will hardly be perceptible.

--Unknown

Speak less...No one ever put their foot in their mouth when they were not speaking. Worse, if you are speaking, you can't be listening, and we always learn much more from listening.

--Mark H. McCormack

Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening.

--Dorothy Sarnoff

Whether you listen to Mozart or Duke Ellington, you can deepen your understanding of music only by being a more conscious and aware listener—not someone who is just listening, but someone who is listening for something.

--Aaron Copland

Nothing improves a student's hearing more than praise.

—George Pawlas

He that listens after what people say of him shall never have peace.

--Thomas Fuller

Listen to the whispers and you won't have to hear the screams.

--Cherokee Saying

Our hearing has evolved to attend to and analyze changes in the complex acoustical patterns of nature, like those of forests, running water, rain, and wind. Evolution did not prepare us to endure the kinds of man-made sounds that pervade our cities and lives today. Noise strongly affects our emotions, nervous systems, and physiology.

--Dr. Andrew Weil

I will feel no guilt on shutting my door to those who didn't listen.

—Stefan Molyneux

Hearing has consequences. When I truly hear a person and the meanings that are important to him at that moment, hearing not simply his words, but him, and when I let him know that I have heard his own private personal meanings, many things happen. There is first of all a grateful look. He feels released. He wants to tell me more about his world. He surges forth in a new sense of freedom. He becomes more open to the process of change. I have often noticed that the more deeply I hear the meanings of the person, the more there is that happens. Almost always, when a person realizes he has been deeply heard, his eyes moisten. I think in some real sense he is weeping for joy. It is as though he were saying, 'Thank God, somebody heard me. Someone knows what it's like to be me.'

—Carl Rogers

Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen.

—Margaret J. Wheatley

A skilled listener can help people tap into their own wisdom.

—Richard Rohr

I have often heard that the outstanding man is he who thinks deeply about a problem, and the next is he who listens carefully to advice.

—Livy

Listen to all, plucking a feather from every passing goose, but follow no one absolutely.

--Chinese Proverb

First you have to know them, and then you have to like them, enough to respect what they're going through but not accept responses that may be inappropriate. You really do have to like them. Boys, when they're threatened and angry, they act out in ways that make them difficult to deal with. They can become threatening, sullen, disrespectful. They learn to be frightening as a defense mechanism in the environments they have to navigate. When you don't like them, those are reasons to get rid of them—to put them out of programs, put them out of schools, to call the police to deal with them, lock them up. But when they're kids that you actually know, and actually like, they will listen to you, and you will listen to them. And that's where change starts.

--Geoffrey Canada

Discovering an inner history requires listening—and often not to the first story told.  
—Sherry Turkle

We do not have to have the correct answers to listen well. In fact, often the correct answers are a hindrance to listening well, for we become more anxious to give the correct answer than to hear.

—Richard J. Foster

The important thing about our counselor is that she listens. I do know that lots of other people listen, but she listens the most. She does B.A.B.E.S. and lots of other things. She tells stories with important morals. She listens to you and tells no one. She is an important counselor. But the important thing about Mrs. Standley is that SHE LISTENS!!

—Anonymous Student

Many times, I get only one chance to work with a situation, crisis, student, or family. I need to be right on the button the first time out of the gate, so listening skills are essential.

—Larry Steele

Our children might not always say out loud what they are feeling, and school counselors need the ability to listen -- to words, body language, unspoken words, and attitudes. School counselors can effectively help students by really listening to them whether they are talking or not.

—Carol Turner

## **HOW TO LISTEN SO KIDS WILL TALK TO YOU: THE LANGUAGE OF ACCEPTANCE**

1. Acceptance must be demonstrated, not just felt.
2. Communicate acceptance non-verbally by:
  - a. Non-intervention (letting them ‘do their thing’)
  - b. Passive listening (silence)
3. Communicate acceptance verbally by:
  - a. Avoiding the ‘Typical Twelve’ (Roadblocks to Communication)
  - b. Using ‘Door Openers’ (‘I see’, ‘Oh’, ‘Mm hmm’, ‘Is that so’, etc.)
  - c. Active Listening (‘You’ messages that reflect their feelings back to them)

—Dr. Thomas Gordon



## ATTITUDES REQUIRED FOR 'ACTIVE LISTENING'

1. You must want to hear what the student has to say. This means you are willing to take the time to listen. If you don't have the time, you need only say so.
2. You must genuinely want to be helpful with this particular problem at that time. If you don't want to, wait until you do.
3. You must genuinely be able to accept the student's feelings, whatever they may be or however different they may be from your own feelings or from the feelings you think a student 'should' feel. (This attitude takes time to develop.)
4. You must have a deep feeling of trust in students' capacity to handle their feelings, to work through them, and to find solutions to their problems. (You'll acquire this trust by watching students solve their own problems.)
5. You must appreciate that feelings are transitory, not permanent. Feelings change—hate can turn into love, discouragement may quickly be replaced by hope. Consequently, you need not be afraid of feelings getting expressed; they will not become forever fixed inside the student. (Active listening will demonstrate this to you.)
6. You must be able to see the students as separate from you—unique persons, separate individuals with their own lives and their own identity. This 'separateness' will enable you to 'permit' students to have their own feelings, their own way of perceiving things. Only by feeling 'separateness' will you be able to be a helping agent for students. You must be 'with' them as they experience their problems, but not joined to them.

—Dr. Thomas Gordon

What kind of support do students typically need?

A lot of times all kids want is someone to listen. It's a safe way for them to sort things out, to hear themselves say some of these things. A lot of times kids will say something, and I'll say, 'Stop—did you hear what you just said?' And they say, 'What?' And I say, 'Repeat what you just said.' And they repeat it. Then they say, 'Oh my God, that does sound stupid.' There are lots of little things you can do to help kids discover things in their own way and help them [grow].

But then there are times when I've had to call the department of social services because kids are not safe. We have mandatory reporting if we suspect abuse.

—Mark Kuranz

We know what we told him, but we don't know what he heard.

—W. Edwards Deming

Listen to understand rather than listen to respond. That will save you a lot of heartache and grief.

—Barack Obama

A key to the art of conversation is learning how to be an effective and active listener.

—Cindy Ann Peterson

To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept.

Listening is much more than allowing another to talk while waiting for a chance to respond. Listening is paying full attention to others and welcoming them into our very beings. The beauty of listening is that, those who are listened to start feeling accepted, start taking their words more seriously and discovering their own true selves. Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you.

—Henri J. M. Nouwen

Respect. Learning how to respect begins with learning how to listen. Listening begins with being tolerant of what we hear. Learning tolerance teaches us how to understand. Understanding allows us to learn how to care. Caring means we've learned how to respect. Just like a toddler, we take one step at a time. Just like a puzzle, we find one piece at a time. Just like building a bridge, we connect one section at a time. So learning respect is just how I said, it's one step, one piece, one section at a time, but the finished product can make the world safe from all the wars and destruction of human kind. Because we have listened, because we were tolerant, because we understood, because we cared, we learned to respect and we created a world to care for all of mankind.

--Andrew Terr Bush,  
Age 10

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.

—Bryant McGill

Let me listen to me and not to them.

--Gertrude Stein

Friendship consists of a willing ear, an understanding heart and a helping hand.  
--Frank Tyger

The most called-upon prerequisite of a friend is an accessible ear.  
--Maya Angelou

Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to hear the answer.  
--Ed Cunningham

Friends pick us up when we fall down, and if they can't pick us up, they lie down and listen for a while.  
—Unknown

A friend is someone who listens to your bullshit, calls you out on your bullshit, and then continues listening to your bullshit.  
—Ged Backland

Marriage: When a man agrees to give a woman the best ears of his life.  
--Unknown

In the first year of marriage, the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year, they both speak and the neighbors listen.  
--Unknown

A man is already halfway in love with any woman who listens to him.  
--Brendan Francis

Before she marries, every girl should take a course in domestic silence.  
—Evan Esar

If you want to know how she will talk to you after marriage, listen while she talks to her younger brothers.  
—Unknown

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.  
—Bobby (Age 7)

Free speech carries with it some freedom to listen.

—Warren E. Burger

One learns more from listening than speaking. And both the wind and the people who continue to live close to nature still have much to tell us which we cannot hear within university walls.

—Thor Heyerdahl

To listen is an effort, and just to hear is no merit. A duck hears also.

—Igor Stravinsky

Retirement—The big difference is that it isn't mandatory for anyone to listen to you any more.

--Walter Wright

Maybe there is no actual place called hell. Maybe hell is just having to listen to our grandparents breathe through their noses when they're eating sandwiches.

—Jim Carrey

The most important thing for acting is to listen to the person you're dealing with.

—Ivan Reitman

The ears of men are lesser agents of belief than their eyes.

—Herodotus

Everything in writing begins with language. Language begins with listening.

—Jeanette Winterson

What a blessing it would be if we could open and shut our ears as easily as we open and shut our eyes!

—Georg Christoph  
Lichtenberg

Most people talk, but say nothing. That's ok because nobody is listening anyway. Let today be the day you stop with words and take ACTION! Shut-up and say something with your behavior.

—Steve Maraboli

To talk to someone who does not listen is enough to tense the devil.

—Pearl Bailey