

# The Influence Value of **LISTENING**

*What was your  
action step  
last week?*

*What were  
the results?*

*“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and the need to be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.” – Ralph Nichols*

**Directions:** Take turns reading the paragraphs below. As you read, underline the ideas that capture your attention.

Listening is one of the most important skills that we can have. However, because we utilize this particular skill every day, we often take it for granted. Developing our listening abilities can have a tremendous impact on our lives. How well we listen can greatly influence our relationships and our ability to succeed.

Poor communication skills are often the cause when we fail in our personal and professional relationships. Listening is a key component of communication. When we misunderstand the people around us it is often because we were not listening closely. This is as true when we are talking to a co-worker as when we are talking with our spouse. When we listen effectively, we can improve our ability to connect and understand the people that we interact with in our day-to-day lives.

The best kind of listening requires us to set aside internal and external distractions so that we can listen without judgment or interruption. In order to listen at this level, we have to be emotionally and mentally invested in the conversation. This means that we are fully engaged and fully present while the other person is talking. We must stop what we are doing, make eye contact, and pay attention to their words. It may sound easy, but most of us do not truly listen at this level on a regular basis.

By becoming better listeners we can greatly improve our effectiveness in our personal and professional relationships. We can greatly increase our ability to influence, persuade,

and negotiate. We can be more effective with customers. We can collaborate more effectively with team members. We can deepen our family relationships. In every single situation and circumstance, we can benefit from listening to others.

Not only does listening affect our success and achievement, but it also affects our ability to grow. We learn because we listen. We grow because we learn. Good listeners are always seeking to learn from the people around them. They understand that they can learn something from every person they meet. If we value people and seek to understand them, we can absorb their wisdom and experience. Wisdom is earned through the continuous time and energy that we invest in listening, learning, observing, and understanding.

## **BENEFITS**

If you practice the Value of Listening, you will experience these benefits:

1. You will establish mutual respect with the people in your life. When you value what others say, you demonstrate that you value them and their point of view. This will create shared loyalty and trust.
2. You will develop conflict-resolution skills. Even the most volatile people or situations can often be diffused when they have the opportunity to be heard.
3. You will learn and grow as you seek out and listen to the valuable knowledge and experience of other people.

# Action plan for LISTENING



4. You will gain favor and influence with people because they know you care about what they have to say and how they feel.
5. You will create a positive environment by avoiding conflict and misunderstandings.

## CHARACTERISTICS

1. These people are disciplined listeners. They consciously choose to speak less and listen more.
2. These people are eager to learn. They continually look for the opportunity to grow in every situation and in every conversation.
3. These people seek the truth. They are not satisfied with superficial information, so they ask questions to get clarity and a deeper understanding of conflicts or situations.
4. These people mediate between opposing viewpoints. They are more concerned with what is right than with who is right.
5. These people develop close relationships at home and at work. They make others feel valued and important by listening deeply to their needs and desires.

## STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. **Listen with an open mind.** Be prepared to hear and consider all sides of an issue.
2. **Stop what you are doing, make eye contact, and fully engage.** Give the other person your undivided attention. Set aside email, phone calls, and other potential distractions.
3. **Listen objectively.** When you approach the conversation with a non-judgmental attitude you create the trust that is necessary to establish open and honest communication.

4. **Ask questions.** Make sure that you really understand the meaning behind what the other person is saying. Avoid misunderstandings by asking follow-up questions. Paraphrase or summarize the other person's thoughts to show that you are listening and to make sure that you truly understand their perspective.
5. **Avoid the temptation to think about what you are going to say next.** Instead, pay attention to everything the person is saying before you formulate your response.

*Remember... Thoughts become actions.  
Actions become habits.  
Habits become our destiny.*

## EVALUATION AND ACTION

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Who do you know that demonstrates this Value? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this value?										
Check list for the daily reading of this value.	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			