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## Four Golden nuggets of Effective Listening

By Eric Plantenberg

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Why should I improve my listening skills?

It's a great question. For the simple reason that a person's listening skills are a central component to most of the activities people care about. Your ability to understand what others are trying to tell you, to grasp details about projects, to learn information about a customer's needs, or to understand what is going on in your family's life all depend on your ability to effectively listen.

While most people possess the ability to hear, many have never taken the time to consciously develop the ability to listen. Here are four golden nuggets to help you improve your listening skills: Slow down and relax. The fact that your mind can think at least 7 times faster than people can talk identifies much of the problem right from the start. To maximize the amount of information you are receiving from a conversation, you must minimize the number of thoughts that are racing through your mind. To help you slow down and relax, you might try taking slow deep breaths or sitting down. Both can often help slow your pace if you are feeling rushed.

Focus on what is being said. That means no multi-tasking! Splitting your attention between something other than what is being said, whether that is reading, typing in your computer, or even taking notes, are all significant distractions to you ability to listen. It is also frequently annoying or even disrespectful to the person who is speaking.

Ask clarifying questions. Many times what we think we heard and what the speaker intended to communicate are two different things. By jumping to conclusions or making assumptions, we frequently guess wrong. Often times people find that while they are thinking about the meaning of past comments

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they are missing what the person is currently saying. If you are not sure you understand what the person said, make sure to ask a question or two that will clarify their comment. This should be welcomed by whoever is speaking, as it shows you are both listening AND interested in truly understanding what they are saying.

Realize that much of communication is non-verbal. It is equally important to listen with your eyes as it is with your ears. By making good eye contact with the speaker you will pick up much more of the meaning behind what is being said. Facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language all play a vital role in understanding the full message. By actively watching the person speaking, you will also show your engagement and give them more confidence and energy in what they are saying.

Mastering the art of listening certainly doesn't happen overnight, so be patient with yourself while you are putting your new skills to the test, enjoy the process, and as always....

Be FREE!

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### **Making the Most of Your Gold Nuggets**

**By Julie Jordan Scott**

#### **Making the Most of Your Gold Nuggets by Julie Jordan Scott**

There is a Growth Formula I have used in Coaching that has really made some huge shifts In the lives of those who apply it.

Very simply, it is:

Insight + Action = Growth and Development

After practicing a while, I learned that a minor Shift of this formula made a significant impact.

Here is the change:

Insight (Gold Nugget) + Passionate Action = Exponential Growth and Development.

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Action can either be Passionate Action (which is deliberate, purposeful, intentional based in moving towards the possibilities) or it can be Frenetic Action (which is usually based in a fear or scarcity or lack: poverty consciousness. It is about running away from something or avoiding something).

Choose the PASSIONATE action for EXPONENTIAL Growth and Development.

Action Tip: Today when you are spending time reading any personal growth material read it with a piece of paper or notebook beside you. Make a line in the middle of the page lengthwise and label the left side "Insights" or "Gold Nuggets" make note of the Insights or Gold Nuggets as they occur.

When you are done with your reading, reflect upon what Passionate (not Frenetic) Action you can take in regards to that insight. Write the action down. Commit to it.

Simply TAKE PASSIONATE ACTION!

You are on your way to Exponential Growth!

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