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100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Listen Up and Improve your Writing

By Lisa Hood

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Are you a good listener? Almost everyone will answer this question affirmatively. However, listening is not the same as hearing; it requires concentration, effort and practice. To be an effective listener, you must be an active participant of communication, not just the passive recipient.

If you're a writer, you need to be a good listener, no make that a GREAT listener. How can you create life-like dialogue, with its natural cadence, graceful as a dance, if you don't listen to the people in your life?

"I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen." Ernest Hemingway

Do you recognize any of these symptoms of poor listening?

1)Getting distracted, half listening, thinking about something else or what you plan to say next. Part of the problem may be our ability to think four times faster than we can speak. It is easier to stay focused if you remove distractions. Some distractions may be internal: you're ill, upset or you may be physically uncomfortable, while others are external: noise around you, kids, phone ringing, TV blaring. All these factors compete for your attention. If you can't remove the distractions, let the speaker know that now may not be the best time to have a conversation, because you can't give 100% of your attention.

2)Assuming you understand what others have to say. You may be tempted to interrupt the speaker. DON'T. Speakers appreciate having the chance to say everything they would like to say without being interrupted. Jumping in before they are done will make you appear impatient, uninterested and rude. The speaker may be so annoyed they will withdraw from the conversation. After all, why should they bother to speak if you know what they're going to say? One of the best ways to ensure you understand what was said is to ask clarifying questions. You don't need to act like a parrot. If your speaker says "It's raining outside." don't respond with "Are you saying it's raining outside?" When in doubt, it is a good idea to repeat in your own words what the speaker said so that you can be sure your understanding is correct.

3)Being Competitive or Combative. Are you more interested in promoting our own point of view, rather than hearing the other person? According to Stephen Covey, author of Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, you should "Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood." In addition, Covey explains that we listen autobiographically, from our own perspectives, so we will judge what we hear. You may express disagreement through feedback, shaking your head or frowning when the other person is speaking. You may look for weak points of flaws so you can contradict the other person.

Let me ask you again: Are you a good listener?

Active Listening is a form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speaker. The listener pays attention to the speaker, and doesn't attend to other activities, and then paraphrases what she thinks the speaker has said. This enables the speaker to validate or clarify and to feel they have been heard.

Empathic Listening is achieved when you suspend judgment and receive the message. You are genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking and feeling. Empathy is achieved when you are able to see through another person's eyes.

You can improve your listening skills with the following techniques:

- 1.Remove distractions so you can give the speaker your full attention.
- 2.Paraphrase what you have heard. Do not parrot; rather rephrase what you've heard in your own words.
- 3.Refrain for making judgments and assumptions. They are based on your perspective and may not be what speaker intends.
- 4.Do not interrupt or think about what you're going to say before the speaker is done.

According to Dr Beverly Langford, LMA Communication, "When we listen we expand our horizons, increase our understanding, and gather material for the next time we have the opportunity to talk."

Writing is a process of communication and no communication is one sided. We deliver a message that we expect our audience to receive, understand and accept. Building upon Covey's message, writers must "Seek First to Listen, Then to be Heard.". When we listen more effectively and empathetically we gain insights which will transform our work.

Lisa Hood is the author of "Shades of Betrayal" and "Shades of Revenge". She has been writing for over 10 years and is presently working on her third suspense novel, "Shades of Jealousy."She is also the Talent Liaison @ BOOKJOBBER.com. Other articles by Lisa Hood can be downloaded from <http://www.bookjobber.com/articles.asp> or email her @ mailto:lisa_j@bookjobber.com

Remembering to Listen: Making the Most of Communication

By Ron Sathoff

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A lot has been written about the communication aspects of marketing. Unfortunately, most of it has focused on the "sending" function — writing the perfect ad, creating the killer sales letter, or making a great sales pitch. We always seem to focus on what we are doing TO a customer, rather than what the customers might be saying to US.

We have to remember that all communication is two-directional. In order to truly be great communicators, we have to improve our skills when we are the receivers. In other words, we have to become great listeners as well as great speakers or writers. Fortunately, there are a few simple things we can do to help improve this aspect of our communication with our customers:

1) Treat all communication as important. From time to time (more often than I like) I have to deal with a salesperson who only seems to be listening for certain things — what I'm ordering, how much I'm going to pay, and when my money will arrive. After a salesperson like this gets what they want, they just tune you out. Luckily, these are usually the salespeople who don't last long.

Truly great salespeople, on the other hand, know that EVERYTHING that a customer has to say is important. In a lot of cases, especially with business opportunities, a customer is more interested in advice than they are in your product. If you take time to listen to their concerns and can provide them with insight (along with your offer), your customer will be much more satisfied than if you just delivered the "goods."

2) Pay attention to differences. Many times, it is easy to forget that every person is different. What you know is different than what your customer knows. You can listen much more effectively if you realize that the customer might be using different terms than you, or might even be seeing things from a completely different perspective.

This is where empathy comes in very handy. As you listen, try to empathize with your customer — put yourself into their shoes so that you can have a better understanding of their wants, needs, and fears.

3) Pay attention to feedback. To grow and survive, a company

needs to adapt. In order to adapt, it has to have sufficient information to know what is needed and what is obsolete. For most of us, the best source of this information is our customers. By listening to the feedback and concerns of our customers, we can get a better feel for what the market is looking for.

Communication is the cornerstone of customer service. To increase our customers' satisfaction, we must make sure that we listen to them as carefully as we would craft our advertising. Only by listening can we meet the needs of our clients and make the kind of reputation that leads to success.



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