

Listening is Underrated #1

Many of us want to be _____ communication. Indeed, _____ the center of human relationships, and _____ a large _____ of professional success. A great conversation becomes a _____ of memory, which _____ one's heart for the rest of his or her life. _____ what _____ to be a great conversationalist? Many people _____ abilities to talk; a _____ person _____ stating opinions, a man of confidence _____ with a _____ joke, or a _____ presenter inspiring a large audience. However, we _____ the importance of listening. Actually, good communication is _____ how well you listen _____ how well you talk. _____, all of us want to be _____, _____, and understood, and we get _____, energized, and motivated _____ we feel so. Why is _____ listening so powerful? How can we develop our qualities as good listeners?

Many of us want to be better at communication. Indeed, it is at the center of human relationships, and it also accounts for a large proportion of professional success. A great conversation becomes a precious piece of memory, which perpetually illuminates one's heart for the rest of his or her life. Then what does it mean to be a great conversationalist? Many people associate this quality with abilities to talk; a knowledgeable person persuasively stating opinions, a man of confidence bringing laughter with a witty joke, or a charismatic presenter inspiring a large audience. However, we hugely underestimate the importance of listening. Actually, good communication is a lot more about how well you listen than how well you talk. Deep down, all of us want to be heard, cared, and understood, and we get fulfilled, energized, and motivated when we feel so. Why is true listening so powerful? How can we develop our qualities as good listeners?

account for	ある割合を占める	persuasive	説得力のある
proportion	割合、比率	witty	機知に富む
perpetually	永遠に、絶え間なく	underestimate	過小評価する
conversationalist	会話上手	deep down	心の底では、本心では
associate	連想する		

Listening is Underrated #2

The values we can give and _____ conversation can be _____ into two _____; informational value and emotional value. The _____ includes useful advice, an _____ opinion on a particular situation, and _____ great books and restaurants. The _____ is psychological satisfaction _____ being _____, sharing love, building trust, and feeling _____. Informational value can be _____ because it is appreciated only _____ truly _____. In fact, _____ as a way of _____ one's _____. When we give information and advice to others, we believe we do this _____ the _____ others. In many cases, however, it is _____ one's knowledge, capability, and significance. We should not _____ to the temptation to prove ourselves. Instead, we need to _____ to figure out what they really want. For example, when somebody says "I just lost my job," it is _____ not a good idea to start _____ the next _____. People usually _____ solutions _____ you anyway. They just want a _____. Moreover, you will _____ you start telling them what they should do. Even _____ advice, they want it only _____ trust and respect. No matter how _____ the advice may be, _____ holds no value if the person receiving doesn't feel like _____ it. Giving advice is far less _____ than building trust, and trust _____.

The values we can give and receive through conversation can be classified into two categories; informational value and emotional value. The former includes useful advice, an objective opinion on a particular situation, and even about great books and restaurants. The latter is psychological satisfaction derived from being approved, sharing love, building trust, and feeling heard. Informational value can be tricky because it is appreciated only when it's truly asked for. In fact, it often ends up as a way of boosting one's ego. When we give information and advice to others, we believe we do this for the sake of others. In many cases, however, it is subconsciously about proving one's knowledge, capability, and significance. We should not give in to the temptation to prove ourselves. Instead, we need to put ourselves aside to figure out what they really want. For example, when somebody says "I just lost my job," it is certainly not a good idea to start counseling on the next job hunting. People usually aren't looking for solutions from you anyway. They just want a sounding board. Moreover, you will shut off their heart as soon as you start telling them what they should do. Even if they seek advice, they want it only from whom they trust and respect. No matter how sound the advice may be, it holds no value if the person receiving doesn't feel like incorporating it. Giving advice is far less important than building trust, and trust arises when they feel heard.

classify	分類する	ego	エゴ、自尊心
the former	前者	for the sake of	〜のために
objective	客観的な	temptation	誘惑
the latter	後者	counsel	助言する
tricky	厄介な、扱いづらい	sounding board	反響板、壁打ち相手
appreciate	評価する、感謝する	sound	適切な、真実な
boost	高める	incorporate	取り入れる

Listening is Underrated #3

Many of you _____ a lot of tips to be a good listener, such as nodding, smiling, looking the person _____, repeating back _____. However, it would be better to _____. _____ no reason to _____ how to show that you are paying attention, if you are, in fact, paying attention. Good communication is not about tips and techniques. It is _____. If you really are interested in the subject or the person you are listening to, you will naturally _____ questions. If you truly believe _____ something to _____ the conversation, you will _____ look up and your facial expressions will be _____. Conversationalists listen well simply because they want to understand, connect, and _____. _____ hand, when you _____ curiosity and respect, any techniques will be useless. _____ how much you _____ smile, _____, and the conversation _____. If you want to change something, you would not like to look for another skill that helps you _____ be a good listener. Rather, you need to develop a self that is sincerely curious and respectful to various _____ and values of others. Good listening is not about waiting _____ the _____ of the speaker to stop moving so you can talk. It _____ attitudes _____ interest and curiosity.

Many of you have already heard a lot of tips to be a good listener, such as nodding, smiling, looking the person in the eye, repeating back what you heard. However, it would be better to forget all of these. There is no reason to learn how to show that you are paying attention, if you are, in fact, paying attention. Good communication is not about tips and techniques. It is about your internal stances. If you really are interested in the subject or the person you are listening to, you will naturally come up with intriguing questions. If you truly believe that there must be something to learn from the conversation, you will spontaneously look up and your facial expressions will be vibrant. Conversationalists listen well simply because they want to understand, connect, and grow. On the other hand, when you lack curiosity and respect, any techniques will be useless. No matter how much you nod or smile, it will come off as false, and the conversation will end up in failure. If you want to change something, you would not like to look for another skill that helps you pretend to be a good listener. Rather, you need to develop a self that is sincerely curious and respectful to various lives and values of others. Good listening is not about waiting patiently for the lips of the speaker to stop moving so you can talk. It radiates naturally from your attitudes with genuine interest and curiosity.

nod	うなづく	pretend	～のフリをする
intriguing	興味深い	radiate	放たれる、発散する
spontaneously	自発的に、自然発生的に	genuine	本物の、真の
vibrant	活気に満ちた		

Listening is Underrated #4

Alongside respect and curiosity, good listeners have cognitive flexibility. They are not _____ with cognitively _____ situations. They are able to _____ contradictory ideas and _____, and don't _____ easy solutions or simple answers. When faced with complicated topics _____ make sense to a _____, such as debate on nuclear power generation and accepting immigrants, they can patiently listen to arguments on both sides _____ reaching extreme conclusions. Therefore, when someone says "I just lost my job," good listeners don't rush to conclude _____. Instead, they _____ try to understand the context _____ himself feels about the experience. He might feel miserable or sad, _____ might possibly _____ unfriendly relationships _____ workplace, or excited about new opportunities. We don't know until we listen with our _____. This cognitive flexibility comes _____ to _____ themselves objectively. They are _____ asking themselves whether they understand _____ or not. They also _____ to the possibility _____ in a _____ topic, or _____. Skillful listeners _____ to various values and opinions, including _____. As Julius Caesar _____, people _____ believe what they want to believe, _____ reject opposite opinions almost _____. It is not _____ easy to listen to and consider different opinions. However, good listeners have chosen to listen to opposing viewpoints as they _____ necessary for _____. In other words, they are essentially _____ and _____, and always looking for a _____. After hearing all of these, if you believe "yes, I'm really _____," you are very likely not.

Alongside respect and curiosity, good listeners have cognitive flexibility. They are not uncomfortable with cognitively complex situations. They are able to cope with contradictory ideas and gray areas, and don't jump to easy solutions or simple answers. When faced with complicated topics where both pros and cons make sense to a certain extent, such as debate on nuclear power generation and accepting immigrants, they can patiently listen to arguments on both sides without hastily reaching extreme conclusions. Therefore, when someone says "I just lost my job," good listeners don't rush to conclude what he feels about it. Instead, they attentively try to understand the context as well as what he himself feels about the experience. He might feel miserable or sad, but he might possibly feel free from unfriendly relationships at his previous workplace, or excited about new opportunities. We don't know until we listen with our mind to a blank slate. This cognitive flexibility comes from their quality to observe themselves objectively. They are constantly asking themselves whether they understand correctly or not. They also remain open to the possibility that they might be wrong in a certain topic, or at least not entirely right. Skillful listeners have been exposed to various values and opinions, including even ones against their favorite beliefs. As Julius Caesar put it, people tend to believe what they want to believe, and they often reject opposite opinions almost instantly. It is not that easy to listen to and consider different opinions. However, good listeners have chosen to listen to opposing viewpoints as they know it is necessary for growth. In other words, they are essentially generous and humble, and always looking for a room to grow. After hearing all of these, if you believe "yes, I'm really good at this," you are very likely not.

cognitive	認知の、認知に関わる	blank slate	白紙の状態
cope with	うまく対処する	expose	晒す
contradictory	矛盾した	generous	寛容な
pros and cons	長所と短所、賛否両論	humble	謙虚な
hastily	性急に	room	余地
attentively	注意深く		

Listening is Underrated #5

One more time to remember; good conversation is a lot _____ how well you listen and understand than how well you speak. It is quite challenging because most of us don't listen _____ to understand. We often listen _____ to _____. We are often _____ the concern about what to say next, but our cognitive resources should be used to understand and empathize. With respect and genuine interest, we _____ our cup and _____ the cup. When we do open our _____, our words should be intended to build a better understanding, such as _____ the _____ context, making sure we understand _____, and asking them how they feel or _____. _____ your friend say "I lost my job," you should not start giving _____ advice, much less talking about the _____ job. It is not your _____, _____ you. True listening _____ oneself. Listening attentively is never _____ ourselves or holding ourselves _____ talking _____. Rather, true listening benefits both sides. People _____. It is not only beneficial in friendships and family relationships, but also _____ of business. As you are a _____ or a boss, _____ to better _____ and communication in your team, and _____, greater performance and productivity. Whether in private or professional lives, good listeners will _____ in the _____, trustful and heartfelt connections with people _____ love and respect. _____ anything more _____ in life? Most importantly, the more people listen sincerely to each other, the more we _____ each other with humanity, _____, _____.

One more time to remember; good conversation is a lot more about how well you listen and understand than how well you speak. It is quite challenging because most of us don't listen with the intent to understand. We often listen with the intent to reply. We are often occupied with the concern about what to say next, but our cognitive resources should be used to understand and empathize. With respect and genuine interest, we empty our cup and let them fill in the cup. When we do open our mouths, our words should be intended to build a better understanding, such as inquiring the detailed context, making sure we understand correctly, and asking them how they feel or interpret it. When you hear your friend say "I lost my job," you should not start giving unwanted advice, much less talking about the time you lost your job. It is not your turn, and it is not about you. True listening requires setting aside oneself. Listening attentively is never about sacrificing ourselves or holding ourselves back from talking with patience. Rather, true listening benefits both sides. People build trust when they feel they are heard. It is not only beneficial in friendships and family relationships, but also in the context of business. As you are a colleague or a boss, it leads to better security and communication in your team, and thus, greater performance and productivity. Whether in private or professional lives, good listeners will find themselves in the midst of warm, trustful and heartfelt connections with people whom they genuinely love and respect. Can there be anything more fulfilling than that in life? Most importantly, the more people listen sincerely to each other, the more we treat each other with humanity, and eventually, the better the world is going to be.

intent	意図	sacrifice	犠牲にする
occupy	占める、占拠する	hold ~ back	抑える、食い止める
empathize	共感する、感情移入する	security	心理的安全性
inquire	尋ねる	humanity	人情、慈愛、思いやり