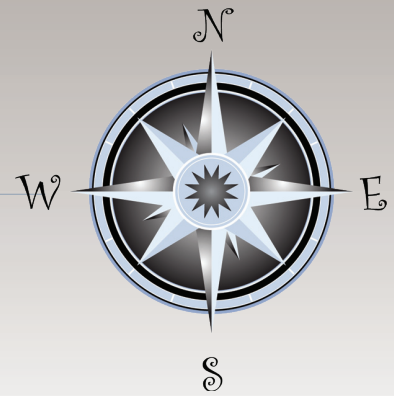


The Leadership Principle of **LISTENING**



“A wise man will hear and increase learning.”

PRINCIPLE OF THE WEEK

Listening... the word listen means to make an effort to hear or pay attention, to give heed, or to take advice. The proverb says “A wise man will hear.” This means that, if we are wise, we will be good listeners. Good listeners are seeking to learn more. Wisdom is not an inherited gift. Wisdom is earned by listening, learning, observing and understanding.

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a tremendous impact on the quality of your relationships and your effectiveness on the job. “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) If you want to be successful in building business and personal relationships, you will need to take the initiative to listen so you will know where people are and what they need.

Lack of attention and respectful listening can be costly. It can lead to poor service, lack of a common goal, wasted time, ineffective teamwork and unnecessary mistakes. You cannot help your customer if you do not understand their problem; it is difficult to manage if you do not understand your employee’s motivation; and you cannot operate as a team if you do not understand each member’s feelings about the issue at hand. In all of these cases, you benefit by listening to others. By becoming a better listener, you will create a more harmonious environment, improve your productivity and

increase your ability to influence, persuade and negotiate.

Benefits

You will reap many benefits from listening to others:

- You will know what people need and how to help them.
- You will learn more and grow in wisdom.
- You will gain favor and influence with people because they know you care about what they have to say and how they feel.
- You will create a positive environment by avoiding conflict and misunderstandings.

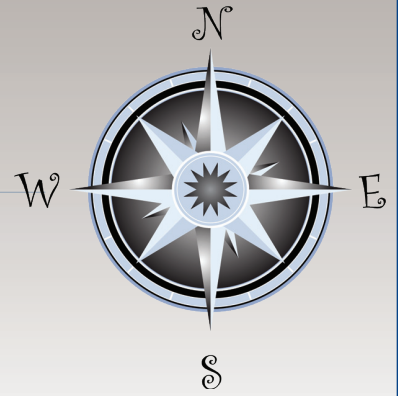
Characteristics

If you are someone who is an effective listener, you will have these traits:

1. You are a disciplined listener who looks for the real meaning behind a person’s words.
2. You set aside time to hear people out and let them know that what they have to say is important to you.
3. You are a seeker of truth. You want to know what is right not who is right.
4. You are a thinker who is eager to learn. You enjoy quiet time to review what is going on inside of you and around you without interruptions.

Action Plan for

LISTENING



5. You are full of questions because you want to ensure that you do not misunderstand and that you, in turn, are not misunderstood.

Steps to Follow

- Prepare to listen by having a positive, engaged attitude.
- Focus your full attention on the other person. Be deliberate with your listening and remind yourself that your goal is to truly hear what the other person is saying.
- Avoid distractions. Set aside email, phone calls and other thoughts that keep you from concentrating.
- Ask questions to make sure you really understand the meaning behind what someone is saying. Paraphrase or summarize the other person's thoughts to show that you are listening to their words and their feelings.
- Set aside your desire to figure out what you are going to say next. Instead, pay attention to everything the person is saying before your form your response.
- Be prepared to hold back your judgment until you have heard what the person has to say in word and in feeling. Do not interrupt. It frustrates the speaker, limits your understanding and is a waste of time.

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

Reflect and respond

1. What type of people do you have difficulty hearing?
2. How has it affected you when someone has really listened to you?
3. Have you ever witnessed what happens in a relationship when someone refuses to listen?
4. What is the biggest challenge you encounter in listening to others?
5. Which of the "Steps to Follow" will you commit to do?

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?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed