

How to Listen So People Will Hear You

By JoJo Tabares

Listening is *the* most important communication skill. It is essential in a marriage, as a parent, and in the business world! Most people are too busy thinking about what they are going to say next to pay much attention to what the other person is saying. However, merely listening to the words that someone says will only give you about 7% of the meaning!

Good conversationalists, great communicators, and smart business owners are "active listeners." What's an active listener? You have heard that old expression: *God gave you two ears and one mouth!* An active listener is someone who listens twice as much as he talks . . . someone who listens to what was not said . . . someone who listens to *how* it was said. An active listener is someone who pays attention to the other person's tone of voice, body language, eye contact, and facial expressions. From this we may determine the degree to which Mary doesn't like people who interrupt her, the fact that John is being sarcastic, or that Sally never talks about her mother. These may be significant bits of information that you will need to know when trying to relate to people!

Here is why active listening is so crucial:

- If your daughter is not excited about your idea for summer vacation, you can stop trying to sell her on it and, instead, talk to her about why she isn't excited about it. You may find that it is a simple misunderstanding. Once dealt with, you may go on to have a wonderful family vacation. If allowed to fester, her resentment can put a serious damper on your fun!
- If your prospective customer says that she is very thrifty, you might want to bring her attention to the fact that your products will save her money in the long run, instead of continuing to talk about the fact that they are less harmful to the environment. Both are true, but only one is really important to your customer.

Active listeners pay attention to the details and can, therefore, better understand and relate to the person with whom they are communicating. The more you know your audience, the better you will be able to tailor your message to that audience whether you are persuading someone of the value of your business or persuading your daughter that she shouldn't go out with *that boy!*

Biographical Information

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JoJo Tabares holds a degree in speech communication, but it is her humorous approach to communication skills which has made her a highly sought-after Christian speaker and writer. Her articles appear in homeschool publications, such as Homeschool Enrichment Magazine and The Old Schoolhouse[®] Magazine, which also endorses her Say What You Mean curricula. You can also find JoJo on Web sites such as Crosswalk.com and Dr.Laura.com. For more information on communication FUNDamentals and Christian-based communication skills for the whole family, please visit <http://www.ArtofEloquence.com/>.