Listening Can Change Your Life

Broward College

Name

Authors Note

Class: SPE-101-08-, TH 9:30-11:50

Informative Speech Time Limit: 6 -8 minutes

My Practiced Speech Duration: 7 minutes 10 seconds

Delivery Order # 2

**Audience Analysis:**

**Primary**

1. What is the youngest member of my audience vs. the oldest?
2. Are there more males or females?
3. How many is English their second language? How many co-cultures?
4. How many other religions than Christian are represented?
5. What income levels are represented in my audience? Who is the wealthiest, who is the poorest?
6. Who in my audience is most like me? Most unlike me? Why? How?
7. Is anyone in my audience living an alternative lifestyle? How?

**Secondary**

1. Why is this topic **important** to **them**? Listening is the most essential part of communicating.
2. How will my audience **benefit** from my words? They can engage in every conversation they have better, making the person they speak with feel GREAT and learn to learn more from others. Become better observers of the world. Get over themselves MORE.
3. Will they learn something ***new***? A tangible skill set to listen BETTER. The desire to listen better.

**Purpose Statement**:  By the end of my speech the audience will listen more competently.

**Skeleton Outline:**

1. What is listening?
   1. Definition
   2. Myths
   3. Facts
2. How can we improve our listening skills?
   1. Awareness
   2. Tips

**Introduction:**

1. **Attention Grabber**:  Movie “Hitch” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n6ehVRzA-s> (Start right after
2. **Thesis**
   1. **Relate (Probe)**:  Think with me for a second… think in your mind of the person in your life who is the *best* listener you know?   (Can you envision them?)  Okay, think about who you know in your life who is the *worst* listener you know?  Now, how good of a listener are you?
   2. **State:** Today I would like to talk to you about how to listen more competently.
   3. **Support:**  Many people have had words to say about listening. My favorite of these is a quote was penned back in 1938 by Brenda Ueland in the Ladies Home Journal “Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward. This is the reason: When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand."
3. **Preview Main Points:**

So today, I would like to explore two questions number 1:  What is listening?  and #2:  How can we improve our listening skills? (Display these two main points on a Powerpoint to accommodate different learning styles and emphasize key points.)

**Transition:**

            Let’s begin by answering the question, what is listening?

**Body:** (Structure/Function)

I.                   **What is listening?** In order to understand what listening is, we need to begin by exploring what is meant by three key words vocabulary words associated with listening: hearing, listening and active listening.  Let’s define each.

**A.    Definitions:**

1.  **Source:** Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter (2008) in the popular communication text book Human Communication, define hearing "as the act of ear receiving sound". So, someone who is deaf cannot receive sound. They (Pearson, et al, 2008) go on to define listening as "the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages". Perhaps this why Harvey Robbins (1992) reports that listening is often a skill that is acquired. “Isn’t it ironic, that the areas that we spend the most time, speaking and listening are the areas in which we are least trained? Listening is the most challenging of the communication skills and the most frequently ignored.” (Display an abbreviated version with key words on a Powerpoint slide to support different types of learners -- include all three words.)

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| **Key Word** | **Definition** | **Description** |
| **Hearing** | Act of receiving sound. (Pearson, et. al, 2008) | So, someone who is deaf cannot receive sounds. |
| **Listening** | Active process of   * receiving, * constructing meaning from, * responding to   spoken and/or nonverbal messages"(Pearson, et. al, 2008) | Skill that is acquired (Robbins, 1985). |

2.      **Connection: (Probe)**How many of you have been in a situation where you were hearing your friend speak?  After they get done speaking, they ask a question or for advice and you can’t respond because you realize you didn’t listen carefully.

**(Personal):** Personally, after I choose this topic I was trying to analyze my own listening skills.  I can clearly recall recently when my friend Zhenya and I had a conversation. She was trying to explain a serious money problem that could cause her to have to move back to Russia.  As she spoke, my mind wondered to other things. When she asked me for advice, I could not respond to her because I had not listened to her, I was thinking about something else. I felt so embarrassed, I really did not mean to hurt her but it looked like I didn’t care.

**Transition**:  Current research attempts to resolve this situation by highlighting the proceess of active listening.

**A. Definitions (Continued)**

Cornell University professor Judi Bromnell (1985), the author of two books on listening- distinguishes active listening as “*an intent to listen for meaning*.  It is a structured way of listening and responding to others.”  In this transaction, the listener’s attention is focused on the speaker. For this focus to occur, the listener must suspending one’s own frame of reference and refrain from judgment are to fully comprehend the speaker. As a result, Bromnell points out, the speaker will be free to fully express him or herself without becoming defensive. The good news is that most anyone can learn to become an active the speaker with practice.

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| **Key Word** | **Definition** | **Attribute** |
| **Active Listening** | * *intent to find meaning* * structured * focus on speaker. * no judgment   (Bromnell, 1985) | Skill  Anyone can learn! |

**Transition**:  Now that we understand these key words, I would like to share with you some common myths that many people believe to be true about listening.

* + 1. **Myths -** Take a moment to review this list -- are there any items on here that you believe to be true about listening (Example: Probe)? (Respond to audience or offer that Myth 4 I found very interesting! Display list on PowerPoint slide.)

**1. Source:**

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| **Common Listening Myths**  Steil, L. K., Summerfield, J., & De, M. G. (1985). |
| Myth #1:  Listening is largely a matter of intelligence. |
| Myth #2:  Listening ability is closely related to hearing acuity. |
| Myth #3:  Daily listening eliminates the need for training. |
| Myth #4:  Our educational system taught us how to listen well. |
| Myth #5:  Learning to read is more important than learning to listen. |
| Myth #6:  A person can will themselves to listen well when they want. |
| Myth #7:  Listening is a passive activity and the responsibility is on the sender. |

**2. Connection:**

So which myth stood out to you? Michael? #1. I agree, many smart people just have way too much to say! Anyone else? For me Myth #4 stood out, it made me this why didn’t our schools require greater listening competency? What’s the last course on listening you attended?

**Transition**:  I will provide a copy of these myths for your review in my handout at the end of the presentation.  For now, let’s conclude this section by taking a look at a few facts about listening.

**C**. Facts

**1**. Source: Get In Front Communications (Piombino, 2013), highlights some current facts about current communication. Let’s see if you can determine fact from fiction! Put each of these bullets on individual PP slides – last slide has all with references cited)

* We listen to people at a rate of 125-250 words per minute, but think at 1,000-3,000 words per minute.
* Less than 2 percent of people have had any formal education on how to listen.
* Images go into your long-term memory, whereas words live in your short-term memory.
* 55 percent of a message's meaning from the speaker's facial expressions, 38 percent from how he says the message and 7 percent from the actual words spoken.
* Harvard Business Review rated the ability to communicate (listening is a vital part) crucial for promotion more important than drive or numbers.

2. **Connection:** (Physical) (Ask 3 students to be volunteers – have a sign that says Fact another says Fiction).   
AS you display slide with bullet ask volunteers to move from fact to fiction. ALL are facts☺ At end share whole list and that all are facts ask volunteers to sit.

Look at list. (Probe) How can these facts impact your ability to listen? (Wait for a response – share my opinion… #1 helps to explain why it is difficult to truly focus on what another person is saying, our brain works faster than their mouth!

**Transition:** Given this information we have covered thus far, do you feel that you have a better understanding of what listening is? Great! Let’s move on to our second question. Show Main points on PP.

II.                **How can we improve our listening skills?**

**A.    Awareness, question your ability to listen.**

   1.      **Source:**   Judi Bromnell (2005) states, the first step to improving our listening skills begins by questioning our own ability to listen. Listening is so important it is the basis of our human interaction. As Susie Mitchell Cortright (2001) points out: “Listening makes our loved ones feel worthy, appreciated, interesting, and respected. Ordinary conversations emerge on a deeper level, as do our relationships. When we listen, we foster the skill in others by acting as a model for positive and effective communication.”

 2.      **Connection (Personal)**: Believe it or not, I compare listening with respect.  I have been in the situations where I heard what person is saying, but really was sending messages to wrap it up, so I could make my point. Sometimes, I could just ignore what that person was saying by watching TV, or looking in the magazine with the phrases like ‘yes ‘or ‘uhh’ without paying full attention. This speech has taught me that I want to be a better listener. I know that when someone doesn't listen to me, I don't appreciate it. It feels very disrespectful to be ignored, or have someone pretend like they are listening or are anxious for me to shut up and so they can begin making their own point.

**Transition:** I was happy to discover in my research some strategies to improve my listening skills. The second thing we can do to improve our listening skills is to ...

**B.** Practice active listening skills.

**1. Source:** Susie Mitchell Cortright (2001) describes 10 tips to practice active listening skills**.** Review this list! Which of these will be easy to master? Which will be difficult**?**

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| **Tip** | **Description** |
| 1.  Face the speaker | Sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language. |
| 2. Maintain eye contact | To the degree that you all remain comfortable.. |
| 3. Minimize external distractions | Turn off the TV. Put down your book or magazine, and ask the speaker and other listeners to do the same. |
| 4. Respond appropriately | Raise your eyebrows. Say words such as “Really,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts: “What did you do then? and “What did she say?” |
| 5. Focus solely on what the speaker is saying. | Try not to think about what you are going to say next. The conversation will follow a logical flow after the speaker makes her point. |
| 6. Minimize internal distractions. | If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and continuously re-focus your attention on the speaker, much as you would during meditation. |
| 7. Keep an open mind. | Wait until the speaker is finished before deciding that you disagree. Try not to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking. |
| 8. Avoid letting the speaker know how you handled a similar situation. | Unless they specifically ask for advice, assume they just need to talk it out. |
| 9. Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish to defend yourself. | The speaker will feel as though their point had been made. They won’t feel the need to repeat it, and you’ll know the whole argument before you respond. Research shows that, on average, we can hear four times faster than we can talk, so we have the ability to sort ideas as they come in…and be ready for more. |
| 10. Engage yourself. | Ask questions for clarification, but, once again, wait until the speaker has finished. That way, you won’t interrupt their train of thought. After you ask questions, paraphrase their point to make sure you didn’t misunderstand. Start with: “So you’re saying…” |

2. Connection: Each day I have been practicing one strategy and have been amazed at the how my relationships have changed! It is as if there is another dimension added to my interactions. Just Tuesday, I was speaking with Coach Steele about my speech – truthfully, I was really proud of it because I worked hard. Rather than the praise I expected, instead she offered critique on a section. When this happens in my life, my normal instinct is to deny or explain what I meant. Instead, I swallowed my words consciously opened my ears and practiced Mitchell’s active listening skill #9. Guess what? After a moment, my ears opened and I heard what she was saying. As a result, I eliminated two minutes from the speech, it makes more sense … I am happier with it. Initially, I really wanted to defend my reasoning, if I had I would have missed a valuable lesson. I wonder how many valuable lessons I’ve missed by trying to defend myself?

**Conclusion**:

**Review Main Points:** What were the two points we covered today? (Reward audience/Show on PP)

1. What is listening?
2. How you can become a better listener?

**Review Thesis (Return to EACH):**

* 1. **Support:**Remember how Brenda Euland points out that, “Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.”
  2. **State:** Thus by incorporating these skills in our lives, we can be the creative force that helps those around us expand by listening more competently.
  3. **Relate:** And, in so doing you can avoid being someone who is a bad listener and perhaps…you can even be someone who listens like this.

**Return to Attention Grabber:** Replay Hitch video**.**

References

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**A/V Analysis: (DO YOUR OWN WORK DON’T PLAGIARIZE THIS)**

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| --- | --- |
| **Strength**   * Speech provides lots of examples from my life about listening. * The facts presented in my speech are supported and proved with details. * I had good Eye Contact * The speech wasn’t boring it kept me wanting to hear me of what was next. * Great attention grabber in beginning and in conclusion. * Used candy to increase listening. * I am dressing VERY professionally. * Set the Stage Well. * I practiced with my BUDDY! | **Weakness**   * The word “so” was used many times through my speech. * A lot of the time there was awkward pauses. * Need better transition from sub-point to sub-point * Read hard sources a little too quickly * Did not flow well when I would look at my cards, I need to practice more |
| Opportunities    * Informs the audience about Listening – this can CHANGE their life. * Can listen to my audience and provide example in the speech. * Stretch my voice to bring points home * Use eye contact to connect with audience * Pay attention to other’s speeches and try to incorporate points | **Threats**     * On the first A/V analysis, my time was almost double the specified time. * I need to find more time to practice my speech. * Responding without listening because of my nervousness. * My buddy will jump the gun and get ahead of me with my slides! |

**Synopsis**

This A/V analysis was helpful. It did help me recognize my weaknesses and hopefully I can correct them before the speech. I feel with practice the analysis will help the overall flow of my speech when I deliver it tomorrow for the class. I am conscious of my energy and will think positive thoughts about the performance. In order to avoid cheating, I read this then got rid of all the words so that it was my own thoughts!