

Bad Habits of Listening Checklist (for self or others)

The following is a list of ten bad habits of listening. Check any of the listening bad habits that you are sometimes guilty of committing when communicating with others. Be honest with yourself!

- I interrupt to try to finish the other person's sentences.
- I jump to conclusions.
- I am often overly parental and answer with advice, even when not requested.
- I make up my mind before I have all the information.
- I am a compulsive note taker.
- I don't give any response afterward, even if I say I will.
- I am impatient.
- I lose my temper when hearing things that I don't agree with.
- I try to change the subject to something that relates to my own experiences.
- I think more about my reply while the other person is speaking than what he or she is saying.

***If you have someone you trust have them fill out this form for you sometime, from their perspective. It can be a very enlightening and positive experience.

Communication Shutdowns

This list is made up of common phrases people use that tend to shut down conversations and communication. If not prepared for this it can create major barriers.

Come up with examples of questions or statements you can use to direct/redirect, move towards a positive outcome or help discover the obstacles that this person feels are in the way.

1. Don't be ridiculous
2. It'll cost too much.
3. That's not my responsibility.
4. We don't have time.
5. We've never done that before.
6. That's not the way we do things around here.
7. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
8. We're not ready for that.
9. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
10. It will never sell.
11. We will become the laughing stock of the community.
12. We tried that before and it didn't work.
13. It simply can't be done.
14. It's too radical of a change.
15. That will make our current equipment obsolete.
16. It's not really our problem.
17. Let's get back to reality.
18. I need to go over the numbers again.
19. Let's put a pin in that for now.
20. It's not in our budget.
21. We have done alright without it all this time.
22. It won't work here.
23. Okay, but if it doesn't work, you're the one who's going to get the blame.
24. I don't personally agree, but if you insist.
25. Are you crazy?

Recovering Information – Asking Questions to Understand

We often generalize when speaking, and in doing so, leave some information out. Recognize when generalizations are being used, and recover the missing information or reasoning with questions.

Generalizations	When You Hear:	Ask:	Find the Reasoning
Universal words	Every, all, never, always, etc.	"Every time?" "All of the group?"	What is the size, frequency, scope of the issue?
Restriction of possibility	Can't, impossible, unable	"What stops you?" What would happen if you did?"	What barriers do you perceive?
Statement of necessity	Have to, necessary, must	"Or what would happen?" What would happen if we didn't?"	What consequences do you fear?
Nominalizations Words that label a process as a thing or category	"No communication" "Lack of Transportation"	"How would you like to?" "What doesmean to you?"	How specifically does this category affect you?
Unspecified nouns and verbs	"Costs are rising" "Work is harder"	"Which costs" "Compared with what?"	What specifically does this category represent for you?
Simple negatives	Not sure, not happy	"About what in particular?"	"Find out where the discomfort arises"
Lack of reference	They aren't happy, It happens all the time	"Who specifically?" "To you or to someone you know?"	Try to distinguish personal experience and the experience of others' in circle of reference