



Communication Fundamentals #1: Listening

Instructions: Take up to five minutes to read through your sheet. After five minutes, your Trainer will direct each person in your group to “teach” their subject.

The person in your group who traveled the longest distance to get to work today will go first.

Listen with the Intent to Understand (Not to reply)

Imagine two friends are talking, and one friend tries to talk about a restaurant she enjoyed last night. However, before she gets very far, her friend jumps in and says, *“My daughter and I went there two months. I had the Gnocchi and this amazing Australian wine!”* So on she goes - about her experience.

It’s annoying to talk to someone who only loves to hear themselves talk, and doesn’t care to “hear” or “understand” you.

There are two ways to listen. 1) We can **listen with the intent to reply**, as in the example above, and that’s not listening at all. It’s talking “at” the other person.



2) Alternatively, we can **listen with the intent to understand**. Listening with the intent to understand is the highest level of listening. It's listening to your customer with the focus of understanding what they're saying - from their perspective.

So in the example, instead of humblebragging about her excellent Australian wine, the friend might ask, "Really? When did you go there? How was your meal?"

When you listen only to reply, customers pick up on that. They'll often over-explain their situation, almost pleading with you, or they might become difficult, or some will ask to talk to a manager. They do this because you weren't genuinely listening and they know it.

Avoid the mistake of listening with the intent to reply. **Make interactions easier by listening to your customer with the intent to understand** - grasping the fullness of the problem they're explaining, and understanding just how this issue has impacted them.