

# Self-Inventory of Listening Habits

The purpose of this inventory is to help you gain a better understanding of your listening habits. When you have completed it, you should be able to describe your listening habits, and you should have established a priority of listening habits to improve. This is, of course, a subjective inventory and not an objective test.

**Directions:** Read this list, and place a check in front of each habit that you now have, even if you use that habit only a third to a half of the time. Then, re-read the habits you have checked, and place **two checks** in front of those habits that you think you perform almost all of the time that you spend listening, perhaps 75-100% of your listening time.

1. I prepare myself for listening by focusing my thoughts on the speaker and the expected topic and committing my time and energy to listen.
2. I ask questions about what I have just heard before letting the speaker know what I heard and understood.
3. I follow the speaker by reviewing what he or she has said, concentrating on what the speaker is saying and anticipating what he or she is going to say.
4. I analyze what I am hearing and try to interpret it to get the real meaning before I let the speaker know what I heard and understood.
5. I look at the speaker's face, eyes, body posture, and movement, and I listen to his/her other vocal cues.
6. I think about other topics and concerns while listening.
7. I listen for what is *not* being said, as well as for what is being said.
8. I fake attention to the speaker, especially if I'm busy or if I think I know what the speaker is going to say.
9. I show in a physical way that I am listening, and I try to help set the speaker at ease.
10. I listen largely for the facts and details, more than I listen for ideas and reasons.
11. I am aware of my own facial, body, and vocal cues that I am using while listening.
12. I evaluate and judge the wisdom or accuracy of what I have heard before checking out my interpretation with the speaker.
13. I avoid sympathizing with the speaker and making comments like, "I know just what you mean — the same thing has happened to me," and then telling my story before letting the speaker know what I heard and understood.
14. I find myself assuming that I know what the speaker is going to say before he or she has finished speaking.
15. I accept the emotional sentiment of the speaker.
16. I think up arguments to refute the speaker so that I can answer as soon as he or she finishes.
17. I use "echo" or "mirror" responses to feedback to the speaker specific words and phrases the speaker has used that I need clarified.
18. I am uncomfortable with and usually reject emotional sentiments of the speaker.
19. I paraphrase or summarize what I have heard before giving my point of view.
20. I am easily distracted by noise or by the speaker's manner of delivery.

Place an X in the blank by each number you have double-checked.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 2 _____  | 1 _____  |
| 4 _____  | 3 _____  |
| 6 _____  | 5 _____  |
| 8 _____  | 7 _____  |
| 10 _____ | 9 _____  |
| 12 _____ | 11 _____ |
| 14 _____ | 13 _____ |
| 16 _____ | 15 _____ |
| 18 _____ | 17 _____ |
| 20 _____ | 19 _____ |

Now you have an inventory of your *effective listening habits* (all of the *odd-numbered* habits that you checked), your *ineffective listening habits* (all of the *even-numbered* habits that you checked), your *most effective listening habits* (all of the *odd-numbered* habits that you *checked twice*), and your *most ineffective listening habits* (all of the *even numbered habits* that you *checked twice*).