

What is communication?

In today's world EQ (Emotional Quotient) is more desirable than IQ (Intelligence Quotient). Emotional Quotient comprises of various traits, however, the most important of all is the ability to communicate effectively with others.

Subscribers to the Harvard Business Review rated "the ability to communicate" as the most important factor in making an executive "promotable" - more important than ambition, education and the capacity for hard work.



One 20 year study that followed the progress of Stanford University MBAs' revealed that the most successful graduates shared personality traits that distinguish good communicators. "A desire to persuade, an interest in talking with other people and an outgoing ascendant personality."

What is communication?

It is the sending and receiving of ideas, thoughts or feelings from one person to one or more persons in such a way that the person receiving it understands it in the same way that the sender wants him/her to understand. Hence it is a two-way process for which the binding force is the feedback loop. Unless the receiver gives feedback - verbal or non-verbal - to the speaker, the speaker will not be able to continue the information for too long.

Communication can be broken down into 3 major areas:

Verbal

- ❖ Spoken
- ❖ Written

Non-Verbal

Body Language

Listening

What is communication?



- ❖ Active Listening
- ❖ Passive Listening
- ❖ Reflective Listening

Tom Peter's, business consultant and co-author of the book, 'In Search of Excellence', emphasizes that one key to business success is careful listening. "Find out what the customers' really care about, and then act. Listening - that is the key."

Here is an instance of poor listening:

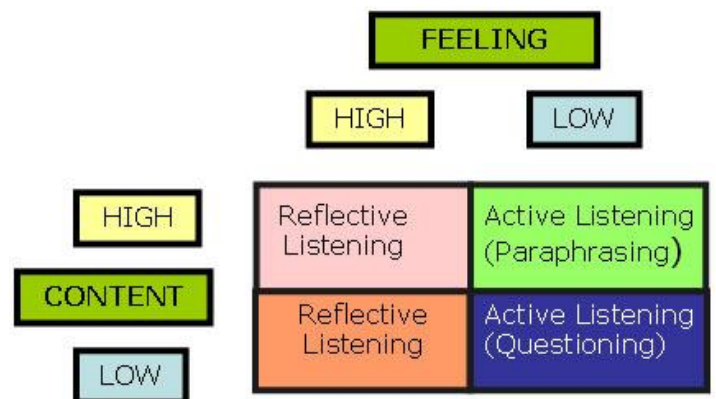
In 1998 a devout Hindu in USA ordered a snack at his local Taco Bell (a fast food place that sells Mexican food). Because eating beef is forbidden in his religion, he emphasized twice to the person at the counter that he wanted a burrito containing only beans and not meat. After taking a bite of the burrito, he discovered to his horror that the burrito contained beef and not beans.

The customer later sued (and won) Taco Bell for millions of dollars claiming emotional distress as well as medical expenses and loss of wages. The law suit was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

The most important type of listening is **Active Listening**. Active Listening goes beyond regular listening as the listener encourages both the share of information as well as feelings. Active **Listening** is the key to building relationships as it displays genuine interest.

Passive Listening is appropriate when there is a key note speaker who does most of the talking and the audience is in the training or education mode.

Reflective Listening is appropriate when the person is worried, frustrated, confused or upset. It is about acknowledging the feeling more than the content. You reflect or echo what the person seems to be feeling by saying something like - "It seems as if these instructions are a little confusing and causing you to become frustrated."



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This grid clearly demonstrates the situations in which **Active Listening** is appropriate. In Quadrant 2 the skill of paraphrasing should be used because content is high and it is important to check the accuracy of your comprehension on a regular basis.

In Quadrant 4, the skill of **questioning** is important as the amount of content from the speaker is low. Hence, asking facilitative questions will give you not only more content but, more importantly, content that is relevant.



Quadrant 1 and 3 reflect the fact that we should use **Reflective Listening** any time a person becomes emotional. It is important to stop justifying or explaining the reasons for the problem and simply acknowledge the emotions. Statements like, "I know the delay has caused you a lot of inconvenience. I would be just as upset as you." "I appreciate the fact that you have a busy schedule and the lack of **communication** on our part has impacted your day significantly."

By improving our **listening** we can make a dramatic impact on our **communication skills** thereby positively affecting all aspects of our life.

"**Communication** is really all anyone ever gets paid for ultimately.....and if you cannot effectively **communicate**.....you will PAY....and not get paid." Doug Firebaugh

Author Bio:

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