



9 Steps to Improve Your Listening

Act on It! by *Sam Deep and Lyle Sussman* has some great information for tough management challenges. Most Managers truly believe that they are good listeners...but their employees would disagree. Here are 9 steps to help improve your listening skills:

1. Strive to give people good listening-to's rather than good talking-to's.
2. When possible, think about the speaker and the topic in advance of a conversation.
3. Whenever you feel on the spot to say something, but you're not sure what to say, listen instead for clues that will enable you to summon a good response.
4. Keep the speaker talking when you need to hear more. Ask questions such as "And?" "Then?" and "What Else?"
5. Light a talking fire under speakers by repeating the final couple of words of their last sentence as a question ("...she said she would quit?")
6. When you are engaged in a conversation, have nothing in your hands or in front of you, so that you focus on the speaker.
7. Look into speakers' eyes intently enough to see the color of their eyes without staring the person down.
8. Don't plan a response in your mind when the speaker is still talking...don't be just waiting to talk, actually listen.
9. Most of all, don't interrupt. Let the speaker wind down completely before responding.