

# How to Get People to Listen

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## **Sample of Content:**

How we listen and perceive is influenced by the four perceptual styles: Audio, Visual, Feeler, and Wholistic.

## **Content:**

How we listen and perceive is influenced by the four perceptual styles: Audio, Visual, Feeler, and Wholistic. For instance, Audios prefer to turn their ears toward you when you are speaking rather than look you in the eyes. They are filtering through what you are saying to get to the bottom line as quickly as possible. If they are listening intently, they might close their eyes. However, since childhood they have been told "Look at me when I'm speaking to you!" In defense, they might take notes of the main points when listening because then it's acceptable if they don't maintain eye contact with the speaker.

When speaking to Audios, if you ramble, they will either interrupt or ask, "And the point is?" Or they will tune you out. You need to collect your thoughts before talking to Audios and cover the points in a logical sequence.

Visuals are the "show me" people. They will listen more intently and remember what you are saying if they can see what you're talking about. Otherwise you need to speak in descriptive words so they visualize what you are saying. It will appear like they aren't listening if you don't give them enough details because their faces are blank. When they finally get it, their faces light up with comprehension.

When Visuals are speaking, maintaining eye contact is essential. If you look away, they will stop in the middle of the sentence. For them it has the same effect as if you interrupted them. Visuals receive their inspiration and ideas as a picture in their mind's eye. They may become frustrated if the listener can't seem to "see" what they see. Often Visuals will whip out a piece of paper so they can sketch or diagram what they are talking about.

What Feelers hear is filtered through their feelings so it's not what you say but how you say it that they are hearing. If you say something in a sarcastic voice, they most likely will remember how the words hurt rather than what was being said. If the hurt is intense, it will put a lump in the throat that literally blocks the Feeler from expressing his or her pain or feelings.

When communicating with Feelers, if you want them to listen, speak gently. A loud angry voice intimidates them and may cause them to withdraw within themselves. If you are asking them to do something, actions speak louder than words. Give them the opportunity to try what it is you want them to do so they feel secure that they understand. Otherwise they might say, "You mean!" and repeat back what you just asked to make sure they heard you correctly. This might exasperate the Audio who doesn't like to have to provide all the details Feelers need to understand. He may snap, "Is there an echo in the room?" Feelers may become flustered, which makes it even more difficult for them to listen attentively. They would rather flee and come back later when they aren't so rattled.

Wholistics hear, see, and feel what you are saying simultaneously so they quickly grasp the whole picture or the gist of what is being said. Then they want to leap into action. This eagerness may cause them to interrupt the speaker and finish the sentence because they think they know what the person is going to say. However, sometimes they might be wrong. When speaking to Wholistics, you may have to ask them to let you finish what you're saying, to not interrupt.

Wholistics will listen more intently if you first give them the essence of what you're going to talk about so they can respond to the idea or thought. After they have expressed what they perceive is the direction you are going, you can clarify or agree. Wholistics might become antsy if they have to wait a long time before they can speak. But not interrupting and listening attentively is a quality they can learn.

So how can we get people to listen to us and remember what we say? As the speaker, it's up to us to make sure the listener understands before moving on. When it's one-on-one or in a small group, ask if they understand or if they need more clarification. If it's important for them to remember, you need to connect your message with a direct benefit to the listener. A benefit to the listener is always something that directly impacts them. Remember the WIIFM factor, "what's in it for me." So, for example, you may ask a spouse to pick up some items from the drycleaner and remind him that one of the items is a suit he'll need for the concert that he's been so looking forward

to. Or if you're speaking to an audience, address the benefits to them, how the information you're sharing will enhance or impact their lives.

When speaking to a large group, you can keep all of the perceptual styles listening attentively if you address the key points quickly for the Audios, then illustrate it with an interesting story (but not too long) so the Visuals can visualize and the Feelers can better comprehend the key points, and then follow up with a brief summary. This way, people won't tune you out.

You want the listeners' heads to nod because they are connecting with your message rather than having their heads nod because there is a disconnect, and they are falling asleep.

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