



**Module #4:  
Leadership Through Quality**

*Listening Is a Voluntary Act*

**Module Objectives**

- Describe the four developmental stages of Empathic Listening,
- Practice the use of Empathic Listening to resolve an issue.

**Module Description**

This Leadership Through Quality Management Development Module focuses on developing an individual's understanding of the role of Effective Communication Skills in the workplace. This module introduces the concept of Empathic Listening. In addition, four levels of listening and four developmental stages of listening are presented. An emphasis is placed on individual and small-group "hands-on" activities which apply and reinforce the concepts.

## In Business...

To Listen Effectively is to Reach a Clarity of Understanding

To Understand Clearly is to Respond Appropriately

To Respond Appropriately is to Enhance Communication

To Enhance Communication is to Support Cooperation

To Support Cooperation is to Improve Morale

To Improve Morale is to Increase Job Commitment

To Increase Job Commitment is to Focus on Productivity

Listening is Good Business

# Personal Listening Inventory

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1. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest), how committed are you to improving your listening? \_\_\_\_\_
2. On average, what percentage of each business day do you spend listening? \_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale of 1-10, (with 10 being the highest), how would you rate yourself as a listener? \_\_\_\_\_
4. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the best listener you know? \_\_\_\_\_
5. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the worst listener you know? \_\_\_\_\_
6. On a scale of 1-10, (with 10 being the highest), how would the following people (where appropriate) rate you as a listener?

Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Lover \_\_\_\_\_

Subordinate \_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

Close colleague \_\_\_\_\_

Best friend \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately 45% of all time spent communicating involves listening, next comes speaking with 30%, reading with 16%, and writing with 9%.

NOTE: Our children and spouse rate us the lowest, whereas our best friend and manager rate us the highest. Our subordinates and close colleagues rate us similar to the way we rate ourselves.

# Listening to Learn Learning to Listen

Listening is the most used aspect of human communication.

In a typical workday:

**\*Managers and Supervisors...**

- listen to superiors and subordinates in order to gather information for decision making and problem solving;
- listen to and mediate among differences and conflicts in staff opinions;
- interview and listen to prospective managers, staff, clients, and customers; and
- make presentations and listen to participants' comments and questions.

**\*Associates...**

- listen to comments, announcements, and directions from managers and co-workers;
- listen to internal and external customers' comments, questions, complaints and compliments.

The opportunities for understanding or misunderstanding are countless. *So if people in an organization have poor listening skills, the costs may be high:*

- \*Wasted meeting time;
- \*Inaccurate orders, shipments and/or high returns;
- \*Lost sales opportunities; and
- \*Inadequately informed, misinformed, confused, or angry staff and customers.

**"He knew the precise psychological moment  
when to say nothing." Oscar Wilde**

In looking at the graphic on empathic listening which appears on the next page, we can recognize that good listening is an active integrated communication skill that demands energy and know-how. It is purposeful, powerful and productive.

On the graphic, the key elements of communication are represented by the words: Speaking, Observing and Hearing. However, to communicate effectively we must also engage in an internal process of: listening (as a result of the other person speaking), interpreting (translating information which we selected through observing the speaker) and evaluating (giving meaning to our listening of the speaker's message).

*Only after this internal process has been completed, can we respond appropriately.*

In "The Seven Habits of Effective People," bestselling author, Stephen Covey captures the challenges of listening within :

**Habit #5: Seek First to Understand; Then to Be Understood.**

\*Seek first to understand involves a very deep shift in paradigm. We typically seek first to be understood.

\*Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.

\*When another person speaks, we are usually "listening" at one of four levels:

- **Ignoring**-not really listening at all, including lack of verbal/non-verbal cues;
- **Pretending**-not listening, however providing verbal/non-verbal cues;
- **Selective/Attentive Listening**-listening only to what one "wants" to hear whatever suits one's base, isn't disturbing or challenging, and so on; usually involves attention to facts, but not to feelings. Spouses and managers/Associates often accuse one another of this;
- **Empathic Listening**-listening with intent to understand. **Empathic listening gets inside another person's frame of reference.** This involves listening to "put yourself in another person's place" to understand--but not necessarily agree with-what's being said and why.