Active Listening

- Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a significant impact on your job effectiveness and the quality of your interpersonal interactions with others.

- For instance:
  - We listen to obtain information
  - We listen to understand
  - We listen to learn

- Given all the listening that we do, you would think we'd be good at it! Most of us are not, and research suggests that we only remember between 25 to 50 percent of what we hear. That means that when talking for 10 minutes, most people only pay attention to less than half of the conversation.

- Self-reflection may infer that you don't hear the whole message either. You hope the important parts are captured in your 25-50 percent, but what if they're not?

- Listening is a skill that we can all benefit from improving. By becoming a better listener, you can improve your productivity and minimize conflict and misunderstandings. All of these are necessary for workplace success.

  **Tip:**

  - Good communication skills require a high level of **self-awareness**. Understanding your communication style will go a long way toward helping you create good and lasting impressions with others.

About Active Listening

- The way to improve your listening skills is to practice "active listening." Active listening is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the complete message being communicated.

- To do this, you must pay attention to the other person very carefully.

- You cannot allow yourself to become distracted by whatever else may be going on around you or form counterarguments while the other person is still speaking. Nor can you let yourself get bored and lose focus on what the other person is saying.

  **Tip:**

  - If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating his or her words mentally as he tells them – this will reinforce his message and help you stay focused.

  - To enhance your listening skills, you need to let the other person know that you are listening to what that person is saying.
To understand the importance of this, ask yourself if you've ever been engaged in a conversation when you wondered if the other person was listening to what you were saying. You wonder if your message is getting across or if it's even worthwhile continuing to speak. It feels like talking to a brick wall, and it's something you want to avoid.

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