

J FICKLEY COACHING

7 POWERFUL LISTENING HABITS

THAT WILL BOOST YOUR IMPACT OVERNIGHT



Jim Fickley

THE 7 LISTENING HABITS

- 1** | SHIFT YOUR MINDSET - LISTENING IS ACTIVE
- 2** | OPEN UP AND LOOK THEM IN THE EYE
- 3** | ELIMINATE EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS
- 4** | EMPATHY - PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES
- 5** | PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY DON'T SAY
- 6** | DON'T HIJACK THE CONVERSATION
- 7** | PROVIDE REGULAR FEEDBACK

Greetings!

Thanks for downloading the “7 Powerful Listening Habits” ebook.

Let me ask you a question. Who taught you how to listen?
Was it your parents? . . . a class in school? . . . did you listen to a podcast or read a book? My guess is probably nobody. Right?

If you're like most people, you've never taken class or taken the time to study the subject and yet **every one of our daily encounters involve our ability to listen well.**

My plan with this ebook is not to cover every little thing that has to do with becoming a great listener. Instead, rather than overwhelming you with loads of information, I decided to distill it down to 7 top habits that will get you started immediately.

You couldn't have picked a better time to do it either. **These days, there just aren't enough good listeners to go around.**

In our high tech, high-speed communication culture, everyone wants to get their message out. The problem: real listening has become rare.

Here's the deal: we're more connected and more productive than ever. But, studies have shown that in our productivity, we are spending less and less time really listening to each other.

So, your capacity to listen well - it's needed now more than ever.

Trust, understanding, conflict resolution, cooperation, and the ability to solve problems together all flow out of your power to understand where the other person is coming from.

When you begin to develop these habits, you will significantly improve your relationships at home and work.

I think you'll be amazed at what happens. More importantly, the people around you will be amazed!

Remember . . . It all starts with your ability to focus on the ones right in front of you. "It's not about you . . . it's about them." You first have to shift your mindset.



HABIT 1 – SHIFT YOUR MINDSET

The first habit will require you to shift your mindset. Listening is a contact sport, not a passive encounter.

So you have to change your thinking from “this just happens” to “I got to step up and actively participate.”

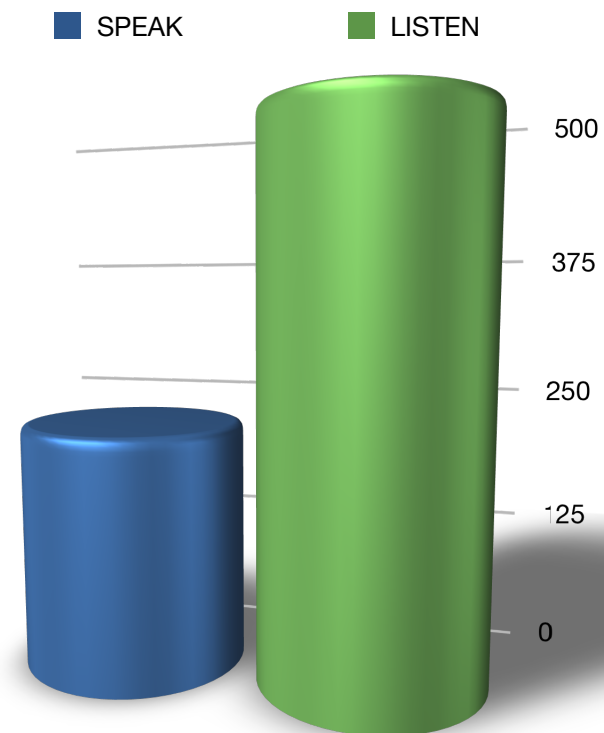
It's a foundational step that everything else is built on.

How often have you found yourself talking with someone, and then before you know it your mind is off doing its own thing?

You know you're supposed to be concentrating on what the person is saying, but you're thinking about your last meeting or who you met this afternoon or what you're going to say next.

Here's why: The average person can **talk at about 225 words per minute.**

But, **you can listen at up to 500 words per minute.**



Our minds are looking for other things to do in the meantime.

And that's the problem. If we just go on autopilot, we'll end up somewhere else.

This tendency to let our minds wander highlights the need for why we need to develop our first fundamental habit.

To be a great listener, you have to shift your mindset from passively participating to actively listening.

You can shift your mindset to active listening by doing this:

Put other things out of mind. When you find yourself thinking about other things like what's for dinner or is it going to rain, try to put these thoughts out of your mind and concentrate on the person right in front of you.

Focus on the speaker. When you find it particularly difficult to concentrate on what he or she is saying, try repeating his or her words in your head to keep you on track.

HABIT 2 – OPEN UP AND LOOK THEM IN THE EYE

The next habit is about literally positioning yourself to hear what your friend, coworker, or spouse has to say.

Your goal is to assure them that you are in fact paying attention to them by how you look at them and how you stand or sit when they are talking.

You've probably experienced just the opposite of this from time to time.

Have you ever been in a conversation where the person you were talking with kept scanning the room or looking out the window? Maybe they kept working at their desk or watching the game on television.

Maybe there were little things that you couldn't even put your finger on, but during the conversation, you got a sense, by the way they were holding themselves, that

they were not paying attention to you.

When that happens to me, I either want to give up and walk away or talk louder to make sure they hear what I'm saying. In either case, I end up feeling frustrated

On the other hand, you know when someone is really listening to you when they engage you non-verbally.

So the next time you're in a conversation think S. O. L. E. R.

Square up. Face the person full on. No one wants to talk to the side of your face. They don't want to see the top of your head while you're looking down, doing something else.

By squaring up, you're communicating to the other person that they have your full attention and what they have to say is essential.

Open up your posture. When you cross your arms and roll our shoulders forward and down, you appear closed off. The alternative is to open up and help the person you are talking with to feel welcomed.

Lean forward. This might seem really awkward or unnatural. At first it is. But give it a try. When you lean forward, you're encouraging dialogue. You're demonstrating to the other person that you are involved in what they have to say.

Make good eye contact. This should feel natural and relaxed for both of you. Studies

show that if you maintain eye contact for about 80% of the time the other person will feel like you are engaging with them in a meaningful way.

Too much eye contact feels creepy and uncomfortable. But on the other hand, If you use too little, you seem disinterested.

Remain relaxed. Put the person at ease by the way you handle yourself, so the other person is free to speak.

An easy way to remember how to engage non-verbally is by using this acronym:

- S - Square up
- O - Open up
- L - Lean forward
- E - Eye contact
- R - Relaxed

HABIT 3 – ELIMINATE EXTERNAL DISTRACTIONS

If you applied just this one habit, it alone would change how people feel about you when they're talking with you.

You need to eliminate or at least significantly minimize the external distractions so you can **make the person feel that what they say really matters.**

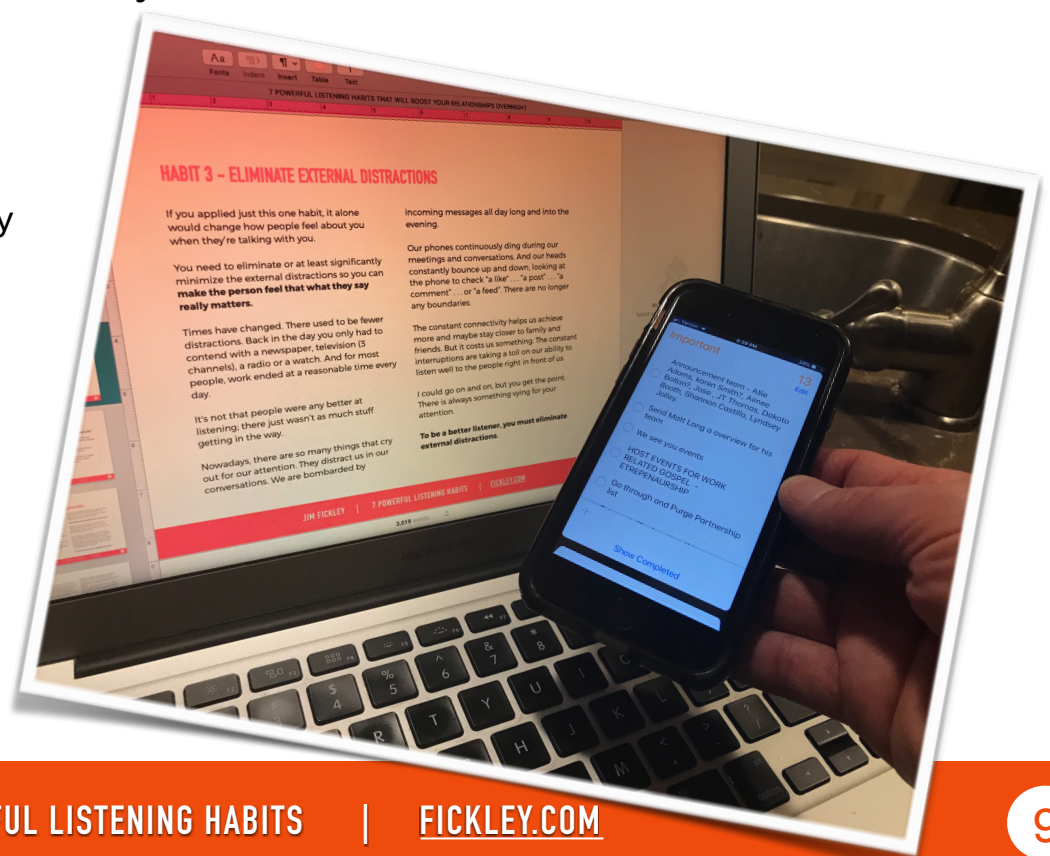
Times have changed. There used to be fewer distractions. Back in the day you only had to contend with a newspaper, television (3 channels), a radio or a watch. And for most people, work ended at a reasonable time every day.

It's not that people were any better at listening; there just wasn't as much stuff getting in the way.

Nowadays, there are so many things that cry out for our attention. They distract us in our conversations. We are bombarded by

incoming messages all day long and into the evening.

Our phones continuously ding during our meetings and conversations. And our heads constantly bounce up and down, looking at the phone to check “a like” ... “a post” ... “a comment” ... or “a feed”. There are no longer any boundaries.



The constant connectivity helps us achieve more and maybe stay closer to family and friends. But it costs us something.

The constant interruptions are taking a toll on our ability to listen well to the people right in front of us.

I could go on and on, but you get the point. There is always something vying for your attention.

To be a better listener, you must eliminate external distractions.

To set some healthy boundaries between you and the constant barrage try this:

Put away or push back. Next time you're talking with someone put your phone in your pocket, push back from the desk, and fully engage in the conversation.

Create family rhythms. Choose times in your family schedule when no phone is permitted near the table or family space so that conversations flow easily.

Turn it over. If your phone rings or signals an alert during a conversation, merely turn it over and continue on with the discussion. Quit checking your watch (especially your Apple watch) when you're talking with someone.

HABIT 4 – EMPATHY ... PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

Empathy is experiencing the feelings of joy, fear, sadness or any other emotion that another person may be feeling. When you can put into words and convey with your non-verbals what you, in turn, are feeling with them, you are an empathic listener.

Empathy is at the heart of good listening.

To experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's frame of reference and feel what they might be feeling in that moment.

In her book - Daring Greatly, Brene Brown said, **“Empathy is connection ... Empathy is connecting with the emotion that someone is experiencing, not the event or the circumstance”**

If you're not used to doing this, it can be rather taxing. It takes a lot of concentration and effort, but it is one of the most helpful things that you can do for someone else.

Here's how to get started if this is new to you.

Think of a time when you went through a similar experience. What were you feeling? What was going through your head?

For instance, if my wife says, “I just don't feel like I'm really making a difference.” I could say nothing at all, hoping it just goes away.

Or I could blurt out, “It will all work out.” Or I could even try and fix her by saying something like, “Just go tell your boss that you want to have more impact with the team.”

Or I could choose to put myself in her shoes.

I could think of the hundreds of times when I have felt like I wasn't making a difference and remember what how I felt. And then try and put words to what I felt during those times?

Let's try it. Have you ever felt as though you weren't making a difference? What did you feel like? Confused? Frustrated? Burdened?

Our next move then, after we've identified how we have felt, is to start to build an empathic bridge. In my case if I'm putting myself in her shoes I might sense that she is feeling "frustrated".

And if it's not that word then I need to come up with a better one to describe the way she's feeling?

After the bridge has been built, I'd say something like, "Boy, that sounds frustrating. Tell me more." Or, "You're feeling frustrated because . . .

HABIT 5 – PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY'RE NOT SAYING

To be a great listener, you have to listen with your eyes.

By paying close attention to what the other person is saying with their non-verbals, you gain a better sense for how they're really doing.

Have you ever walked up to a friend and before they even said a word you asked, "Are you okay? . . . Something wrong?" What was going on?

Chances are their face or the way they held themselves spoke louder than words.

So, before they even said a word they let you know, in no uncertain terms, that something was going on, and you picked up on the fact that something was off.

Over the years I've learned to do this with my wife. I want to make sure that both her words and non-verbals line up. I want to make sure that when she is saying . . .

"That's fine," that in fact she really means that everything is okay.

Your relationships will deepen when you begin to spot non-verbal cues.

It will help you know what's really going on and gain a better sense of what the other person is feeling.

Next time you're in a conversation, try this:

Focus on non-verbals. Pay as much attention to what they're not saying than what they are saying.

"See" if you can identify how they are feeling by how they are holding their body.

Does it all line up? In that same conversation, look to see if what they are saying lines up with what their body is telling you. If they are communicating something non-verbally don't be afraid to talk about it.

HABIT #6 – DON'T HIJACK THE CONVERSATION

Remember, the point of all these listening habits is to focus on the other person and what they have to say.

If we keep jumping in with our own agenda or story, it's not about them anymore. It's about us!!

Has this ever happen to you? You're sharing a story or something that happened to you, and right in the middle, someone else jumped in. They hijacked the conversation and started talking about themselves and imposing their agenda.

Maybe they gave you a piece of advice. Or they prematurely started sharing a similar thing that happened to them. Perhaps they disagreed with you without even hearing what you had to say fully.

What did you feel like? What message did you receive?

"I don't really care about you."

"Your opinion doesn't matter . . . mine does."

"This conversation is a contest, and I want to win."

"You're not relevant, interesting, or important . . . I am."

Stephen Covey, author of "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" states, **"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."**

It's easy to see why this happens . . . we're autobiographical listeners.

We filter everything through our own experiences.

We evaluate what is being said and how it measures up to “us.”

We interpret what someone else is saying and begin formulating our response.

Before we know it, we’re jumping in before the other person is done talking.

To stop interrupting prematurely, next time you’re in a conversation try this:

Adopt the “it’s not about me, it’s about you” habit.

Slow your pace down. If you are a fast thinker and fast talker, it’s on you to slow yourself down. Relax and let the other person express themselves at their own pace.

Allow the conversation to flow. Use natural silences, when they occur to build rapport. Don’t jump in because of your own discomfort,

Don’t try to fix. When someone shares a problem, don’t see it as a signal for you to jump in and suggest solutions that you think “might help.” Most people want to be listened to. They don’t want advice.

HABIT #7 – PROVIDE REGULAR FEEDBACK

By providing non-verbal and verbal feedback, you let the person you are listening to know that you are paying attention to what they are saying and following their train of thought.

You show that you understand where the person you are talking to is coming from.

It's a simple practice that helps you quickly build rapport and establish trust in the conversation.

We're made for feedback.

When you and I were babies, long before we understood what others

were saying, we navigated through life based on a constant stream of verbal and non-verbal feedback we received from others.

The non-verbal nod of the head, a smile, or raised eyebrows, or the verbal hmm, oohs and aahs, all helped us to make sense of how we were doing in the relationship.

We tuned into what others thought about what we were doing based on the facial expressions and the sounds they made.

We still need it. We're made for it.

Next time you're in a conversation, try this:

Nod. You can help the person you're talking with feel comfortable by nodding or showing that you understand through appropriate facial expressions.

Use an occasional well-timed "hmmm" or "uh huh".

Use other words. Say other words like, "Yes," "Right," "That makes sense". A well timed "tell me more" or "i understand" will help boost the relationship.

Reflect on the speaker's feelings. If it fits, say things like, "You must be thrilled!" "What a terrible ordeal for you." "I can see that you are confused."

Feel free to share this [link](#) with a friend for easy access to this ebook!

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE!

I know you want to live and lead intentionally. And I know you want to have thriving relationships with the people you interact with everyday at home and work. They do too!

So now it's your turn. You can take it and run with it.

These 7 listening habits are just what you need to take your existing relationships to the next level.

I'm excited for you and looking forward to hearing how it goes!

Again, thanks for downloading this ebook.

Please email me at jim@fickley.com or drop by fickley.com any time to stay connected. I'd love to hear how you're applying what you've learned.

