

A Guide to Listening[©]



THE INSTITUTE FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

RATING SCALE		TOTAL POINTS	YOUR LISTENING QUOTIENT
Frequency	Points		
Always	5	261 to 285	Outstanding—you're great!
Almost Always	4	216 to 260	You're a good listener, but work on those areas that still require attention.
Usually	3	171 to 215	You're a fair listener, but you should work on your weaknesses.
Sometimes	2	Below 171	Active listening is an acquired talent—you should make an effort to improve your skills.
Seldom	1		
Never	-2		

CONCENTRATION		POINTS
1	When I talk with others, my mind is completely absorbed by what they are saying and it doesn't wander.	
2	In a conversation, I hold my comments until the other person is finished talking, even though my comments may have direct relevance to what he or she is saying.	
3	I do not let interruptions, like ringing telephones or people walking by, distract my attention from what the person is saying.	
4	I consistently keep eye contact with the person I'm talking with.	
5	I make certain I avoid the <i>mind-reading syndrome</i> . That's where I determine what I believe the person is thinking without listening carefully to what the person is actually feeling and saying.	
6	When I talk with someone, I have a better recollection of what they said as opposed to what I said.	
7	I listen without judging or being critical.	
8	I concentrate on the person's meaning and message rather than how he or she looks.	
9	I make certain not to daydream while someone else is talking.	
10	I concentrate completely on what is being said, even if I am not totally interested.	
11	I can truly say that in most of my conversations, I feel a sincere interest and an inquiring curiosity.	
12	I listen to the other person's view, even if it differs from mine.	
13	I don't stop listening even if I'm fairly certain I know what the person is going to say.	
TOTAL:		



ACKNOWLEDGING

14	I build on previous responses by asking follow-up questions to statements just made.	
15	I make certain that the other person knows I am listening by giving brief, encouraging acknowledgments—such as: <i>I see, really, that's really interesting</i> , and so forth.	
16	I make it a practice not to interrupt.	
17	In a discussion, clearly more than half of my time is spent in listening rather than talking.	
18	When appropriate, I reinforce and affirm the other's view by restating their position.	
19	I am able to empathize with the person I'm having a discussion with—I can truly tell <i>where they are coming from</i> .	
20	I regularly repeat or paraphrase to make certain I understand what the person is feeling and saying.	
21	I really work and think about motivating a person to talk by demonstrating a physical and mental attentiveness and showing expressions of interest.	
22	I am careful about not sending the wrong non-verbal messages—moving to a closed-body position, impatiently tapping fingers on a desk, and so forth.	
23	I make certain that when the other person is talking and looks at me, what they see is a happy reflective, responsive appearance.	
24	I demonstrate my understanding and caring with my body language—leaning forward, nodding my head in approval, arching my neck, my facial appearance, and so forth. I give every evidence of riveted attention.	
TOTAL:		

STRUCTURING

25	Prior to a meeting with a donor or probable donor, I establish my objectives and prepare myself to listen.	
26	When I talk with others, I make mental notes of major ideas, key points, and supporting reasons.	
27	I listen for priorities, sequence, and emphasis.	
28	I move from the general to the specific when I am trying to order or organize the speaker's viewpoint or argument.	
29	I ask for clarification or elaboration regarding the speaker's viewpoint—to ensure proper interpretation and complete understanding of the rationale.	
30	I attend to all promised actions, however great or small, following a discussion.	
TOTAL:		



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

31	When I talk with a donor or probable donor, I encourage a two-way flow of communication by asking open-ended questions	
32	I let others know that I am trying to understand what they are saying by using phrases such as <i>Tell me more about that</i> or <i>Can you give me an example?</i>	
33	I encourage people to express their true feelings about an issue.	
34	I probe and ask what the donor or probable donor might expect from a given action or relationship.	
35	I seek information that will allow me to understand the speaker's framework and context so that I can properly interpret what I am hearing.	
36	I prepare for my meeting in advance by reading, reviewing, and finding out as much as possible about the person I'll be talking with.	
37	In a conversation, I clarify, probe, and question.	
38	I attempt to gather more information about the other person by asking questions.	
39	I work at learning something from each person.	
40	I practice regularly to increase my listening efficiency.	
	TOTAL:	

SENSITIVITY

41	When I am talking with others I read their body language as well as listen to their words, in order to fully interpret what they are telling me.	
42	In effective listening, the non-verbal communication the person sends me is as important as the verbal, and I am alert to that—facial expressions, posture, eye contact, tapping fingers, checking the time, a poker face, tight facial muscles, frowning, and so forth.	
43	I listen to what the speaker is saying, both verbally and non-verbally.	
44	I try not to memorize a conversation but rather absorb the feeling and intent of the message.	
45	I listen to more than the words themselves—I hear the emotional tone of the person, the pitch, the subtle variations that might indicate displeasure, and so forth.	
46	I try to read what's going on behind their spoken words by asking myself what they might be feeling, why they are saying it, and what is implied by what they say.	
47	In a listening mode, I am particularly sensitive to how a person, familiar or not, may feel about being touched—knowing that some people do not like it.	
	TOTAL:	



PERSONAL CONCERNS		
48	Before a conversation with a key person, I make certain my energy level is as high as possible because I know fatigue is a barrier to good listening.	
49	I'm careful about personal habits that may be distracting to the person I'm talking with—chewing gum, biting nails, etc.	
50	I make certain, as much as possible, that the physical environment is appropriate for effective conversation—the music is not too loud, the temperature is correct, and so forth.	
51	I dress in a way and make certain my appearance is such that I do not detract from the conversation.	
52	I care greatly about people and those I meet and talk with, and they can sense that in my listening.	
53	I try to assume a <i>levelling posture</i> where my eyes are on a straight line with the person I'm talking with.	
54	I'm careful to avoid anything that provides a negative connotation: raising an eyebrow, looking away, rolling my eyes, behaving restlessly, slumping, drumming my fingers, swishing my foot, and so forth.	
55	I go into an important session knowing the kinds of questions I'm going to ask and the manner in which I will ask them.	
56	If the person has negative feelings about me or the firm, I do not become defensive.	
57	I attempt to arrange the seating so that the prospect is comfortable and in a manner conducive to direct eye contact and communications.	
58	I love my work and I enjoy life—and I believe this helps make me a better listener.	
GRAND TOTAL:		

SCORING		
ATTRIBUTE	MAXIMUM SCORE	YOUR SCORE
CONCENTRATION	65	
ACKNOWLEDGING	55	
STRUCTURING	30	
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	50	
SENSITIVITY	35	
PERSONAL CONCERNS	55	
TOTAL	285	