

10 Ways to be a Better Listener

In his new book *The Real Rules of Life: Balancing Life's Terms with Your Own*, Dr. Ken Druck talks about what it really means to listen actively and be more effective in all your relationships.

If you'd like to get some insight into how effective you are at listening, take Ken Druck's online assessment at: *Your Listening Report Card*.

Here are 10 of the 25 characteristics of a good listener he's identified. You can discover the rest by using his free self-assessment tool at [Your Listening Report Card](#):

1. **Gives full attention:** Understanding another requires that I "tune in", almost as if the other person were a radio frequency. As I listen to you, I must search for ways to grasp the true meaning of your words and actions and to put myself in your shoes. Unfortunately, most people never really tune in to listen at this level.
2. **Hears the other person out:** Good listening is pure witnessing without interruption. It's about showing empathy and being with someone.
3. **Keeps an open mind while listening:** Suspending one's judgement and truly listening to the merits of what somebody is saying in an unbiased way, similar to the instructions a judge gives a jury, helps you truly tune in to the speaker.
4. **Accurately reflects back what they heard:** An effective listener can accurately reflect back what they heard. For example, you can practise doing this by saying "When you say [insert what the person has said], what I'm hearing is that [insert your interpretation of what was said]. Is that correct?"
5. **Allows reasonable time for conversations:** Good listening means allowing reasonable time for and giving attention unbegrudgingly in service to understanding the other person and whatever's on their mind. This listening has no agenda other than to show you care and to learn.
6. **Approachable/non-threatening:** At the core of good listening is safety. How approachable are you in other people's eyes? Most of us are unaware of the signals we give off, especially with our facial expressions as well as our body language. A person's face and tone of voice might say: "Yeah, what?" "Go away, I don't have time for you," or "So good to see you. How can I be of help?" Executives who pat themselves on the back for keeping the proverbial "door open" policy are often perplexed. "My door is open!" they say. "How come nobody is coming in?" Their door might be open, but their hearts, minds and facial expressions are not and this makes it feel risky or unsafe for others to enter.
7. **Asks for clarification:** A good listener would never say "I understand" when they actually don't. If you need clarification say "I'm not sure what you mean. Could you please explain?"
8. **Doesn't try to fix, change or sway the speaker:** Do you sometimes sense in yourself a tendency to want to be a rescuer or a "fixer"? If the answer is yes, the next time this happens, try practising the art of silence. Listen to the person without judgement and believe in and encourage the person to implement their own best solutions.



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9. **Doesn't fidget or become impatient:** True listening doesn't mean, "All right, yeah, okay, got it, thanks" or "Yes, but ...". These phrases smack of impatience. Real and authentic listening is selfless. Uncontaminated. Patient. Compassionate.
10. **Shows respect for the speaker:** Interestingly, Ken Druck says in his book, "Ninety-nine percent of the organisational consulting, team-building and leadership coaching I do is a tutorial in how to really listen. Good listening is a cornerstone of organisational effectiveness, strong leadership and exceptional customer service. The objective is to always leave the other person feeling respected and understood. The way we show another human being we care, the way we show them we respect and value them, is by really tuning in.

Good listening is a key to every successful relationship, whether it's between a customer and salesman, boss and employee, parent and child, or husband and wife.

So, how do you rate as a listener? If you'd like to win a copy of Dr. Ken Druck's book *The Real Rules of Life: Balancing Life's Terms with Your Own* and two 1:1 coaching sessions with me, enter my Blue Sky Coaching Autumn competition on the website.

For more business and life coaching tips to help you achieve your goals and create and live the life you've always wanted, visit www.blueskycoaching.com.au. To find out more about how you can work with me personally, call me on 0411 471 941 or (08) 8338 3134 or e-mail tania@blueskycoaching.com.au.



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