

What it is

A tool to help people assess their skills as a listener

What it can do

This tool can assist people to:

- o Learn about the various skills and practices of deep listening
- o Evaluate their relative strengths and needs for development as a listener
- o Help strengthen commitment to improve their listening

You can use this tool to improve your own listening skills, or offer to others as part of coaching or training.

How it works

The digital version of this PDF form can be filled out using Adobe Reader. It can be downloaded at: atctools.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

1. The individual answers the questions on the survey that follows.
2. There is an opportunity for even greater learning if the individual also takes the risk of asking colleagues or friends to offer them written or verbal feedback about each of the questions.
3. Completing the survey process should be followed by either self-reflection or coaching to make maximum use of the information.
4. Suggested reflection questions follow the survey.

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention."

– Rachel Naomi Remen

"Listening in dialogue is listening more to meaning than to words. In true listening, we reach behind the words, see through them, to find the person who is being revealed. Listening is a search to find the treasure of the true person as revealed verbally and nonverbally."

– John Powell

The ability to deeply listen is a key to success in work and in our personal relationships. We can all learn to become better listeners.

The following questions invite us to assess the skills and practices that constitute excellent listening. Circle the number that best describes your honest evaluation of your behavior. For even deeper learning, ask some of the people in your life to answer these questions about their experience of you as a listener.

1. I really stay focused on what the other is saying.

(vs. my mind wandering, being distracted or thinking about what I'll say next)

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
7

2. I suspend judgment while I am listening.

(vs. immediately evaluating what is being said)

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
7

3. I listen with curiosity. What might be new? What might I learn?

(vs. assuming I know what they think and feel)

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
7

4. I attend well to the other non-verbally in ways that actively encourage their sharing – being present, appropriate eye contact, open body posture, smiles, head-nodding and encouraging words or noises like “un-huh” that show I’m interested. (vs. appearing distracted, arms folded, or fail to offer the non-verbal encouragers that show I’m interested)

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
7

5. I can sustain my ability to listen attentively for long, deep conversations
(vs. after a while, I notice I have difficulty sustaining attention)

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
 7

6. I don't interrupt. I do allow space before responding, helping others to feel relaxed and comfortable in communicating with me. *(vs. I tend to jump in quickly with my responses, sometimes before people are completely finished)*

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
 7

7. I try to communicate my understanding of what the other has said before stating my point of view. *(vs. failing to acknowledge what the other has said and simply stating my own point of view)*

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
 7

8. Even when I disagree, I try to reflect back my understanding of their position. *(vs. failing to acknowledge any validity in the other's point of view)*

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
 7

9. People tend to come to me with their feelings and concerns because I listen well.

RARELY 1 2 3 4 5 6 MOST OF THE TIME
 7

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What are your strengths as a listener?

In what areas could you use improvement?

What benefits do you see in improving your listening skills?

What listening skills, if any, are you committed to practicing and improving?