



Learning & Academic Resources Dept.  
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## “In and Out Listening”

### Levels of Listening

Level 1 Tuned in: complete attention/intense concentration.

Level 2 Tuning in and out: divided attention/moderate or fluctuating concentration.

Level 3 Tuned out: little to no attention/weak concentration.

The brain functions many times faster than the ears, we tend therefore to do "in and out" listening, picking up on trigger words that set the mind off "responding".

### Barriers to Listening

**Physiological:** If we are ill or uncomfortable it affects our communication. If we are hungry or overly tired that too will affect your ability to listen well.

**Psychological:** A good example would be a family bereavement. We should consider the other person's state of mind and make appropriate allowances. Stress directly impacts one's ability to receive information correctly and even the intent of the communication. Miscommunications in this realm can be highly likely.



**Intellectual:** We may experience someone talking "over our heads" or "down to us" or about something unfamiliar/unexpected. The intellectual level of both parties affects the effectiveness of communication.

**Environmental:** Distractions affect concentration and accuracy. Examples include desk clutter, phones, and windows. The public nature of open-plan offices restricts communication.

**Knowledge base:** When we hear a word it is cross-referenced against our previously learned knowledge to provide a meaning. If we consider the other person's experiences and what they are actually saying we improve our listening accuracy.

**Moral:** Each of us has a set of values. By trying to understand the values of the other person, we can improve our ability to interpret the meaning and importance of statements.

## **Penetrating a Barrier**

1. Remove it if you can.
2. Listen through it if you can't remove it.

## **Actions to Improve Listening**

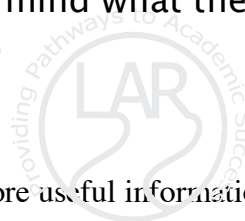
### **Suspend thought**

\* Learn how to listen, be aware of your tendencies to not listen [we all do this, especially men, who have more difficulty multi-tasking. Sorry it is genetic].

\* Try not to interrupt, while thinking up the question we are not listening.

\* Try not to evaluate what you are hearing until the other person has finished.

\* Use plenty of summaries, this shows you are listening. It also gives you an opportunity to test the accuracy of your listening and repeats back to your own mind what the person is saying, not what you think they are saying.



## Clarify

- \* When: You need additional information, or you don't understand
- \* How: Ask for additional information or an explanation

## Confirm

- \* When: You think you understand and you want to make sure
- \* How: First, restate your understanding then, ask for confirmation

## Rapport

To build rapport, demonstrate that you are listening by:

- \* clarifying and confirming
- \* echoing i.e. repetition of a key word or phrase
- \* acknowledging and bridging
- \* giving non verbal signs of attention

Listening is not easy, especially with the pressures of modern living; think of listening as precious gift that we are giving the other person. "Thank you, at least you listened".

