Listening

**Listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.**

***(Job 33:33)***

**And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”**

***(St. Mark 4:9)***

**As an aerobics instructor, I remind my students to individualize their workouts to suit their age and ability. I reiterate that they should “listen” to their bodies. A student approached me after class. Exhausted, she said, “I did what you told us. I listened to my body -- and it didn't have one nice thing to say to me!” *(Shannon A. Saxon, in Reader's Digest)***

**I like the fact that listen is an anagram of silent. Silence is not something that is there before the music begins and after it stops. It is the essence of the music itself, the vital ingredient that makes it possible for the music to exist at all. *(Alfred Brendel, in Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts)***

**When one of the salesmen in our office arrived two hours late for work, he sheepishly explained that he and his wife had been arguing the previous night. “If you can’t speak to me nicely, you shouldn't speak at all!” he had yelled at her. Then he spent the night on the sofa. The next morning he awoke to find the sun high, the house quiet and his wife long gone to work. A note on the coffee table beside him said, “Bryan, it's time to wake up.” *(Janet Fronko, in Reader's Digest)***

**When we understand another person's life better, our sense of being personally offended and threatened diminishes. Out of deep, authentic listening and speaking, new solutions are born. Einstein is credited with saying “We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” When we see beyond our familiar beliefs and values into those of others, we discover that our willingness to hear can create useful, synergistic solutions to the profound challenges we face today. We must forgive others for seeing the world differently than we do to get real resolution. We must hear them out and finally understand what's behind their stated opinions. We must be heard ourselves and share what's behind our stated opinions. When we do these things in our personal lives, we create openings for others to learn how to do this in their lives. The growth of such a practice can transform our world, spilling over into the workplace and into our civic and governmental interactions as well. *(Rev. Mary Murray Shelton)***

**What a blessing it would be if we could open and shut our ears as easily as we do our eyes! *(Georg C. Lichtenberg)***

**Perpetual growth: All your body slows down its growth rate when you get older. Only your ears keep growing. (The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 183)**

If we listened to our intellect, we’d never have a love affair. We’d never have a friendship. We’d never go into business, because we’d be cynical. Well, that’s nonsense. You’ve got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down. *(Ray Bradbury)*

**If you can’t get people to listen to you any other way, tell them it’s confidential. (Farmer’s Digest)**

**The man says to his cat: “Eat some cat food! Play in the yard! Chase something! Your life is filled with possibilities!” Cat: “Meowwww!!” Man: “I don't know what else to tell you.” Cat: “Sometimes I just want someone to listen!” *(Pat Brady, in Rose Is Rose comic strip)***

**Emily: “Bye, Louis.” Louis: “Bye, Emily.” Emily: “Maybe we can finish our conversation in a couple of weeks.” Dad: “What conversation?” Louis: “I don't know; I wasn't listening.” *(Jerry Bittle, in Shirley & Son comic strip)***

**Women don’t want to hear what you think. Women want to hear what they think in a deeper voice. *(Bill Cosby)***

**What does it matter whether I’m right or wrong, if nobody ever listens to me anyway? *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**While in a toy store, my husband and I overheard a mother and her small daughter discussing the dolls. “What does it do?” the child would ask about each one. The mother would answer, “It talks,” or “It wets,” or “It cries.” The dolls were rather expensive, so the mother tried to direct her little girl’s interest toward an ordinary one that was more reasonably priced. “Does it do anything?” the child asked. “Yes,” the mother replied. “It listens.” The little girl reached eagerly for the doll. *(Dinah Smith, in Reader's Digest)***

**Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble. *(Frank Tyger)***

**A customer at the bank where I work asked my name. “Mrs. Elvish," I told him. “It's easy to remember; just think of Elvis and add ‘h.’” Several days later he wrote to the bank, clearly marking the envelope, “For the attention of Mrs. Preshley.” *(J. B. Elvish, in Reader's Digest)***

**None of us will ever accomplish anything excellent or commanding except when he listens to this whisper which is heard by him alone. *(Ralph Waldo Emerson)***

**The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them. *(Kin Hubbard)***

**Are extraterrestrials sending us signals? NASA wants to know. It plans to launch a ten-year search for extraterrestrial intelligence -- or SETI -- in October, 1992, 500 years after Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World. The SETI program will be the largest such investigation ever, involving scientists worldwide. Part of the search will focus on some 800 sun-like stars, and another segment will scan the entire sky. Computers will tune in to as many as 30 million radio channels at once. Scientists will try only to receive signals, not send them. Any extraterrestrials that are already communicating probably use methods more developed than ours. “We would be the technological infants,” says NASA astronomer Michael Klein. “It makes more sense for us to listen.” *(National Geographic World)***

**General John Galvin, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and Commander-in-Chief of U.S. European Command, was asked what was it like to be in charge of so many and various forces. His reply: “I often feel like the director of a cemetery. I have a lot of people under me, but nobody listens.” *(Reader's Digest)***

**Everything that needs to be said has already been said. But, since no one was listening, everything must be said again. *(Andre Gide)***

**God’s Manners: I talked and I talked and I talked to God. And I talked and I talked and I talked. And I never got an answer because God … never … interrupted me … once! *(Jeannette Klemola)***

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**My Favorite Saying: “A good listener is one who can give you his full attention without hearing a word you say.” *(Andy Erhart, in Reminisce Extra magazine)***

**A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something. *(Wilson Mizner, playwright)***

**A good listener is a good talker with a sore throat. *(Tidbits)***

**Good listeners are more than just popular. After a while, they know something. *(Executive Speechwriter Newsletter)***

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**She’s someone who will listen to your problems until you are bored with them. *(Ellen Goodman, columnist, on mothers)***

**I often accuse my husband of not listening to me when I speak to him. At breakfast one morning he commented on how sweet the grapefruit was. “Is it red?” I asked. I received no answer. Two minutes later when he got up to make toast, I asked him, “Do you want some bread?” “You just offered me bread,” he replied. “I didn't say a word about bread,” I said, adding, “You never listen. I asked you if the grapefruit was red.” “See,” he countered. “I do listen. Didn't I just misunderstand what you asked?” *(Eva Lobato, in Reader's Digest)***

**Some folks aren’t hard of hearing; they’re hard of listening. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**We may be willing to tell a story twice but we are never willing to hear it more than once. *(William Hazlit)***

**A man grabbed his friend's arm at a party and said, “I have to tell you about my new hearing aid -- it's the latest thing on the market. Best ever. Nothing like it. I can hear my phone ring from out in the alley. I can hear a hummingbird 100 yards away.” The friend was very impressed. “It's so small . . . what kind is it?” “Quarter to three,” the man replied, looking at his watch. *(Reminisce Extra Magazine)***

I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen. *(Ernest Hemingway)*

**History repeats itself because nobody listens. *(Anonymous)***

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. *(Stephen R. Covey, author)*

Telling Effort: “Being a good listener isn’t as easy as it sounds,” says writer Jane Goodsell. “Looking interested for a long time is very tiring on the eyebrows.” *(Press Associates)*

**Said Reggie Jackson, when asked how fast Tom Seaver pitched: "Blind people come to the game just to listen to his fastball." *(Sports Illustrated)***

**I never learned anything while I was talking. *(Larry King)***

**After 42 years of writing seven columns a week, I still find writing this column immensely rewarding. I realize that many people who write to me don't want advice. They just need someone who will listen. *(Ann Landers, December 25, 1997)***

**Camilla and Mark -- my sister and her husband -- were at a party chatting with some friends when the subject of marriage counseling came up. “Oh, we'll never need that. Mark and I have a great relationship,” Camilla explained. “He was a communications major in college and I majored in theater arts. He communicates real well and I act like I'm listening.” *(Lori Kelley, in Reader's Digest)***

**When a man whose marriage was in trouble sought his advice, the Master said, “You must learn to listen to your wife.” The man took this advice to heart and returned after a month to say he had learned to listen to every word his wife was saying. Said the Master with a smile, “Now go home and listen to every word she isn't saying.” *(Anthony De Mello, S.J., in One Minute Wisdom)***

**Think of listening as a form of meditation. Quiet your mind and focus your attention on listening. *(Linda Eve Diamond)***

**Why men don't listen: When women are speaking at great length, men tend to tune them out. Now men have a scientific excuse. Female voices, a new study finds, are more complex than male voices, making men's brains work harder when listening to them. The shape and size of female vocal cords and larynx lead women to speak with a greater range of sound frequencies than men. Women also naturally have more melody in their voices. Listening to female voices activates the auditory center of a man's brain, which must analyze the different sounds at the same time he's interpreting the words. Men process other male voices in a different portion of the brain. The study also helps explain why people who hear voices generally only hear male voices, British researcher Michael Hunter tells Discovery.com. "The brain would find it much harder to create a false female voice accurately than a false male voice." *(The Week magazine, August 19, 2005)***

**Hagar: “My mother-in-law is visiting us for a month.” Servant: “That's nice.” Hagar: “You don't really listen to me, do you?” *(Dik Browne, in Hagar The Horrible comic strip)***

**For everyone who says: “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,” there are ten who say: “Hear, Lord, thy servant speaketh. *(Mother Teresa)***

**The woman says to the man: “We need to talk . . . so shut up!” *(The American Legion Magazine cartoon)***

**A society that depends heavily upon what is heard on radio and television and on reading news items garnered by reporters who, supposedly, listened well to the reporting of it; a society that literally puts the lives of people into the hands (ears?) of twelve jurists and trusts them to listen accurately and critically in order to make a judgment, a society that is being constantly bombarded with oral communication of the propaganda type needs to be well-trained in listening. *(Ethel Beryl Miller, in Elementary English)***

**Great-Uncle George, who was in his 80s, wandered across the street to chat with a neighbor until dinner time. Considerably overdue when he returned, Uncle George explained without apology, “I got to talkin’ with Mr. Sherwood, an’ he jus’ couldn’t seem to stop listenin’. *(Gordon M. Loos, in Reader’s Digest)***

**We never listen when we are eager to speak. *(Francois Rochefoucauld)***

**Nixon probably broke the law and who hasn’t broken some law worse than he? All he did was listen to peoples’ conversations. *(Thomas A. Hughes)***

**No one is listening until you make a mistake. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**No one really listens to anyone else, and if you try it for a while you’ll see why. *(Mignon McLaughlin, journalist)***

**Ziggy picks up the shell on the seashore and places it to his ear and hears: “Thank you for listening to today’s ocean sounds. Your roaming charges come to eight dollars and thirty-five cents!” *(Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)***

The older I grow, the more I listen to people who don’t talk much. *(Germaine G. Glidden)*

A fashion-forward 7-year-old got Old Navy to upgrade its style. Kamryn Gardner from Bentonville, Arkansas, was irked that the pockets of her pants -- unlike those of her brothers' -- were sewn shut, depriving her of a place to keep interesting rocks. Having learned about persuasive letter writing at school, she picked up her pen and got to work. "Dear Old Navy," she wrote, "Would you consider making girls jeans with front pockets that are not fake." To her surprise, Old Navy sent her some shorts and jeans -- all with pockets -- and a note thanking her for her ideas. "They're really cute," Kamryn said of the new clothes. "But mostly, I just really like the pockets." *(The Week magazine, April 23, 2021)*

**We broadcasters have certain illusions about you viewers and listeners. Anybody in a room with a television set is by definition a viewer, and anybody in a room or car with a radio that’s on is by definition a listener, although this does not make a whole lot of sense. A person in the same room with a book is not necessarily a reader, even if the book is open. (Charles Osgood, in The Osgood Files)**

**Most people would rather defend to the death your right to say it than listen to it. *(Robert Brault, in Family Weekly)***

**An American businessman goes to Japan on a business trip, but he hates Japanese food, so he asks the concierge at his hotel whether there's any place he can get American food. The concierge tells him he's in luck -- a pizza place just opened, and they deliver. The concierge gives the businessman the phone number, and he goes back to his room and orders a pizza. Thirty minutes later, the delivery guy shows up at the door with the pizza. The businessman takes the pizza and starts sneezing uncontrollably. He asks the deliveryman, “What the heck did you put on this pizza?” The delivery man bows deeply and says, “We put on the pizza what you ordered: pepper only.” *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The judge said to the defendant, “I thought I told you I never wanted to see you in here again.” “Your honor,” the defendant said, “that’s what I tried to tell the police, but they just wouldn’t listen.” *(The American Legion magazine)***

**Prayer happens to you when you are ready to listen. *(Cornelia Addington)***

**Any advice for those who want to know “how to get along well” with others? Be a good listener, counselors advise. What prevents good listening, they say, is the tendency to “rehearse”; that is, to plan what you’ll say as soon as the other party pauses. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Three retired priests were driving leisurely in the country one summer morning. All three were slightly hard of hearing. One said, “Is this Wembley?” “No,” said the next one. “It's Thursday.” “So am I,” said the last one. “Let's stop and have one.” *(The Priest)***

**Acting very grown-up, our grandson, 4, told me I didn’t have to read him a story. “But,” he added, “if you want to read one to Grandpa, I’ll listen.” *(Hannah Gilmurray, in Country Woman magazine)***

**Two psychiatrists, one old and one young, both show up each day for work immaculately dressed and alert. At the end of the day, the young doctor is frazzled and disheveled; the other man, fresh as ever. “How do you do it?” the young psychiatrist asked his colleague. “You always stay so fresh after hearing patients all day.” The doctor replied, “I never listen.” *(Ronald Reagan)***

**I’ll not listen to reason. Reason always means what someone else has got to say. *(Elizabeth Gaskell)***

**So often when we refuse to listen, we become obsessed with remaking the world in our own image rather than opening the spirit within us to the spirit of what is. At the deepest level, ours is not to make ourselves heard but to be still enough to hear. As the Native American Elder Sa’k’ej Henderson says, “To truly listen is to risk being changed forever.” *(Mark Nepo)***

**Skillful listening is the best remedy for loneliness, loquaciousness and laryngitis. *(William Arthur Ward, in San Diego Tribune)***

**When people repeat their stories, it often means they don’t feel they have been heard. *(Larry Barnhart)***

**Would you mind repeating what you were saying about my lack of attention? *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**The funny thing about human beings is that we tend to respect the intelligence of, and eventually to like, those who listen attentively to our ideas even if they continue to disagree with us. *(S. I. Hayakawa, American educator and politician)***

**While the right to talk may be the beginning of freedom, the necessity of listening is what makes that right important. *(Walter Lippmann)***

**Woman: “Jeremy! Will you please get your shoes out of the middle of the living room?” Jeremy: “All right! All right! I heard you! You know, just because somebody doesn't respond the first few dozen times you tell them to do something doesn't mean they're not listening!” *(Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman, in Zits comic strip)***

**John Cameron Swayze describes a little island in the Caribbean: “The people still follow their own customs, a few of which remain unadulterated by the tampering of visitors. One of their customs I especially like solves the problem of being courteous and yet not having to listen to a conversation when it doesn’t interest you. You simply say, ‘I’m absent.’ You don’t leave, you stay right where you are, but you pay no attention. You can meditate, whittle, look at the girls, do anything you like. When the discussion veers to something else, you can rejoin the talk.” *(Family Weekly)***

**Wife: “Why do people bother to install car alarms? No one pays attention to them because you hear them all day long! When you have to listen to something day and night, you begin to tune it out. Do you know what I mean? Ralph?” Ralph: “Did you say something honey bunch?” *(Kevin Fagan, in Drabble comic strip)***

**There is nothing so annoying as to have two people go right on talking when you're interrupting. *(Mark Twain)***

**Research has shown that we spend 70% of our waking hours in communication. 45% of that communication is spent listening. Hearing the words and being able to repeat them is not listening. To listen is to understand. 80% of people who fail at work do so for one reason, they do not relate well to other people. *(Joe Sabah)***

**Driving on a back road, I came across a road crew. A workman waved his orange flag at me and gestured that I should turn around and find another route. That evening, when I told my husband about the incident, he looked at me incredulously. “The guy waved his flag at you,” he said, “and you actually listened to him?” “Yes, of course,” I replied. “You know,” he said, shaking his head, “I've got to get a flag!" *(Kim M. Scheffler, in Reader's Digest)***

**You can’t fake listening. It shows. *(Raquel Welch)***

**What you hear is either musical sound or noise. When you speak, the vowels tend to be musical sound, the consonants noise. So says a language expert. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If the person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear. *(Winnie the Pooh)***

**A friend's wife, Dawn, had just finished reading “Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus.” She sighed and said to her husband, “Sometimes women don't want men to fix their problems. Sometimes it’s better if he just puts his arms around her and tells her everything will be okay.” The next morning, Dawn's car had a flat tire. Her husband looked things over. Then he reassured her that everything would be all right, gave her a big hug and left for work. *(Thomas R. Berry, in Reader's Digest)***

**The word “listen” contains the same letters as the word “silent.” I like the fact that “listen” is an anagram of “silent.” Silence is not something that is there before the music begins and after it stops. It is the essence of the music itself, the vital ingredient that makes it possible for the music to exist at all. *(Alfred Brendel, in Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts)***

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