



## TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GOOD LISTENING

1. **STOP TALKING:** You cannot listen if you are talking. As Polonius says in *Hamlet*, “Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice”.
2. **PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE:** Help them feel that they are free to talk. This is often called a “permissive environment”.
3. **SHOW THE SPEAKER THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN:** Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while they talk. Listen to understand rather than to reply.
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS:** Don’t doodle, tap or shuffle papers. It will be quieter if you shut the door.
5. **EMPATHIZE WITH THE SPEAKER:** Try to put yourself in their place so that you can see their point of view.
6. **BE PATIENT:** Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don’t start for the door or walk away.
7. **HOLD YOUR TEMPER:** An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words.
8. **GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM:** Argument and criticism puts people on the defensive. They may clam up or get angry. When you argue, even when you win, you lose.
9. **ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:** This encourages people and shows them that you are listening.
10. **STOP TALKING:** This is the first and the last commandment, because all the others depend on it. You just can’t do a good job of listening while you are talking.

**We were given two ears, but only one tongue - a gentle hint that we should**

**listen more than we talk.**

