

Can Listening Kickstart Happiness, Leadership and Success?

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What does listening have to do with happiness, leadership and success? A great deal. True listening is not the manifestation of judgment, comparison, criticism or complaint. It is one of the greatest sources of validation we can give to another person, and it is our most powerful

source of self reflection and growth. And, listening is one of our most important and powerful communication and leadership skills

While we all like to think that we are listening, many times we are not. Listening is a learned skill. Our brains are set to focus on the negative first, and as such it is easy to put on the ugly tight black hat of judgment and comparison before the first syllable is out of the speaker's mouth. We often do not listen. Rather, we just hear what we expect, what we want or what we presume will be said. The greatest misunderstandings, the most terrible emotional pain resides in the dimension of conversations that were heard but not

listened to, in the spaces between the words that were presumed to be heard or understood.

Hearing is a given for most of us, but true listening is not. It requires the time and the patience to pause, remove judgment, remove comparison and just reflect on what the other person is saying. When we are able to open our ears, our mind and our heart, we are able to listen and in so doing we are giving and receiving the gift of connection.

The gift of connection is one of the most important and powerful gifts that we can give another human being and our self. No matter how seemingly important or unimportant the conversation is, we can always try to connect with another person at a fundamental level of personal validation and respect.

Most of us had few models, few teachers in the art of listening. Rather we made the leap from infancy to childhood to adolescence and adulthood under the tutelage of adults whose tight black hats of judgment and comparison were glued to their heads and often precluded their ability to truly listen. We all know the deep sense of self doubt and invalidation that crept onto our emotional highway when we were not truly listened to. We can choose to remember the pain of invalidation before we choose not to truly listen to another.

The power that is revealed when we truly learn to listen is manifold. Because in learning to listen to another, in stretching our muscles of communication and connection, we also regain the ability, the power to listen to our true needs, feelings and to move beyond judgment and comparison to hear our true voice as well as the voice of others.



We can reach past personal limitations and truly listen. We are born with the ability to develop our listening, communication and leadership skills. We are born with the ability to listen, work and lead happier and better!

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