

Listen. Do you hear the sounds of waves crashing on the shore? What do you imagine when you hear those waves? Perhaps you have fond memories of relaxing on a beach, or maybe for you, this sounds like an ominous warning of something bad to come.

In our course text, Bevan and Sole explain the instrumental importance of listening. They state that it is crucial to being a good communicator. However, I also wanted to show you the power of listening to transport you to a different place or time.

[PIANO PLAYING]

Hear that? What does that make you think of? And are you listening or just hearing? Is there anything to process? Is this a form of communication?

In this forum, you will be addressing listening. While reception is half the model of communication we addressed in week one, listening does not really get as much attention as speaking. In fact, when you hear the word, "communicate," do you think of speaking? How much training have you done on how to speak properly? I'm sure you've had some.

Now how much training have you had on how to listen? It's likely you've had none. Well, this week, we're going to start to address this shortcoming by focusing directly on the importance of listening, how we can improve, and why. To begin, you're going to be required to take a listening quiz and report your score. Use this as the basis of your self-evaluation.

It is OK if you disagree on the score. Just explain why, and go through the feedback you received. Next, you're asked to use Bevan and Sole to describe active empathic listening. This is your cue to go to the next section of the book labeled, Active Empathic Listening, and carefully read that section. Again, beyond simply quoting them on what this means, we want to see you explain this idea in your own words.

Then you are required to explain how you can integrate active empathic listening into your life, and think through how this could improve both your personal interactions and work performance and relationships. You should anticipate needing to spend at least one paragraph thinking through how your listening affects your relationship with family and friends. Then separately, you must think about the importance of listening in your work life. The more specifics you can provide in your listening habits in these two realms, the better.

Now to close everything out, you're required to listen to concrete examples of how your listening impacts your personal and professional relationships. Perhaps you could discuss how you not fully giving your attention to your

children means you miss key details they provide about their lives, interests, or needs. Or maybe you could address how listening at work is crucial, because it is important in what Bevan and Sole call impression management.

You don't want to give your boss the impression that you don't care about what he or she has to say. And you don't want to give the impression that you do not pay close attention to detail, and then end up asking a lot of questions later about information you were already given. When thinking about listening, it is crucial to address themes Bevan and Sole covered, such as motivation, focus, interpretation, and evaluation. Be sure to cover specific themes they addressed about both the importance of listening, how to improve, and what you can gain.

OK, everyone. This is one of our most valuable forums, so be sure to really reflect on your listening here, so you can gain most from these exchanges.