

Part #1

"PREPARING TO LISTEN: HOW? WHEN? WHERE? WHAT? WHY?"

Florence I. Wolff
Department of Communication Arts
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

Nadine G. Marsnik
Verillion Community College
ELY, Minnesota

A Mini-Workshop Presented at the Second Annual Convention
of the
International Listening Association

March 4, 1981
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
The Executive Towers
Denver, Colorado

I. WHY DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN:

"Why Listen?"

Can you answer "yes" to any of these questions?

- _____ 1. I walk out of the dentist's office wondering why I have to have a crown instead of another filling.
- _____ 2. I forget my doctor's instructions before I get home.
- _____ 3. Even after the school superintendent explains the need for a mill levy, I am still confused.
- _____ 4. After my banker explains the interest rate carefully, I still am not sure why my payments are so high.
- _____ 5. Even after the pharmacist explains the possible side effects of my prescription, I have to write it down.
- _____ 6. Sometimes I'm surprised by my repair bill even though the mechanic has explained it carefully.
- _____ 7. I usually have a tax expert do my income taxes because I get confused when he explains deductions to me.
- _____ 8. I take a lot of notes because I get really mixed up if I don't.
- _____ 9. I know what I want when I go into a store, but often the salesperson convinces me that I really wanted something more expensive.
- _____ 10. I thought I understood the message but the meeting must have been at seven, not eleven.
- _____ 11. I never did get good grades in that class, but the prof is really hard to understand.
- _____ 12. I can listen if I want to but I'd go crazy if I listened to every thing my wife (husband, kids, boss) says.
- _____ 13. Sometimes my co-workers get downright rude if I don't just stop everything and hang on their every word.

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, can you calculate the cost in dollars, health, safety, good will, good grades, interpersonal relationships?

I. WHY DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN?

Exercise 2: TAPE: TALK IS CHEAP. LISTENING IS PRICELESS

1. Pencillin taken "as directed" means taken under what specific conditions?
 - a. With meals
 - b. On an empty stomach
 - c. Four times a day
 - d. Two hours before eating.
2. Smoking combined with high blood pressure can precipitate:
 - a. stroke
 - b. heart disease
 - c. kidney disease
 - d. all of the above
3. Before my mother can be placed in a nursing home, her situation must be evaluated by:
 - a. A social worker
 - b. A county health nurse
 - c. A doctor and a public health nurse
 - d. A social worker and a county health nurse
4. The car motor was noisy because:
 - a. the rod was defective
 - b. the number 3 piston was defective
 - c. the pin gland was cracked
 - d. the number 8 piston malfunctioned
5. The tax consultant recommended that if you are audited by the IRS you should:
 - a. Go to an IRS office
 - b. Request that an agent come to your home or office
 - c. Throw yourself on their mercy
 - d. Made no recommendation
6. The Lamaze natural childbirth sessions:
 - a. Will increase your chances for a good delivery
 - b. Will assure that you're physically strong enough for delivery
 - c. Last for ten sessions
 - d. Cost \$15 for five sessions
7. If you rinse vigorously after a tooth extraction you may:
 - a. Develop a blood clot
 - b. Bleed excessively
 - c. Develop a dry socket
 - d. All of the above
8. The legislator assured us that:
 - a. Legislators respond to floods of letters
 - b. Legislators do respond to one or two letters
 - c. Legislators respond to the lobbyist with the most clout
 - d. Legislators respond most quickly to the voters at home.

II. WHAT DO YOU DO TO PREPARE TO LISTEN?

LISTENING INVENTORY

Always/usually usually/ seldom/
occasionally almost
never

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. When listening I quickly determine the speaker's purpose. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I am fully aware of my own reasons for listening. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I listen to the person impartially even if I do not like him. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. As a listener, I am calm and relaxed. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I consciously place myself in what I consider the most productive listening position in the room. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I ask the speaker to talk louder if I cannot hear. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I look forward to listening situations. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I remove distractions by opening windows, pulling down shades, closing doors, moving away from distracting people. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. I respond to literal meanings of words, not to my FEELING about the word. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. I respond only to the speaker's message, never to his or her appearance. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. I listen equally well to a friend, an acquaintance or a stranger. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. I put what I have been doing out of sight and out of mind. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. I prepare for communication encounters by being rested and at ease. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. I ignore distractions that I cannot remove. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. I like to listen to others talk. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. I am enthusiastic about what I can learn by listening. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. I work to improve my listening vocabulary, therefore my listening comprehension. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. Whenever possible I read or find out as much as I can about a subject before I listen. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. I ask questions when I do not understand. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. I stop talking when another begins to speak. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Total score = _____. Divide by 20 to determine whether you are:
 Always____. Usually _____. Occasionally _____. Seldom____. or Almost Never____
 Prepared.

III. HOW DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN

LISTENING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Answer "yes" or "no" to the questions below:

PHYSICAL PREPARATION:

- _____ 1. I really try to get enough rest so that I can listen.
- _____ 2. I try to be comfortably dressed so that I'm not too warm, chilly or pinched.
- _____ 3. I know myself well enough to avoid hunger by skipping meals or drowsiness by eating too heavily before listening.
- _____ 4. I know what distracts me and I take care to remove what I can.
- _____ 5. I seat myself where I can hear and where I can establish eye contact with the speaker.

MENTAL PREPARATION:

- _____ 1. I find out, by reading or discussion, as much as possible about the subject ahead of time. I read the lesson or script if I can.
- _____ 2. I keep an on-going listening vocabulary.
- _____ 3. I am aware of the dangers of stereotyping a speaker by size, appearance, clothing, speech pattern.
- _____ 4. I consciously attempt to listen to difficult material.
- _____ 5. I make a definite decision to improve my listening.

EMOTIONAL PREPARATION:

- _____ 1. I know which subject triggers an emotional response.
- _____ 2. I know which words red flag my temper.
- _____ 3. I can put my own inner worries aside.
- _____ 4. I can listen to a regional accent objectively even if it is one which I personally like or dislike.
- _____ 5. I can overlook poor grammar and refrain from making a judgment about the speaker as a result.

GENERAL PREPARATION:

- _____ 1. I stop talking.
- _____ 2. I put away what I have been doing.
- _____ 3. I refrain from interrupting.
- _____ 4. I am willing to work at listening.
- _____ 5. I am willing to ask questions when I do not understand.

III. HOW DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN?

- Exercise 2: Carry a small notebook that can fit into your pocket or purse. Use it to record the words you add to your vocabulary through listening. At the end of each week, check the precise meaning (and spelling) of each word and record it permanently in your listening vocabulary. Continue this exercise throughout the year.
- Exercise 3: Choose a difficult listening situation that occurs regularly for you. Follow these steps:
- Prepare mentally. Learn as much as possible about the subject.
 - Identify the speaker's motive.
 - Identify your own motive as a listener.
 - Analyze results of listening after preparing and identifying your own and the speaker's purpose.
- Exercise 4: Arrange with a friend to attend a class-or community-sponsored lecture on a difficult topic about which you have no background knowledge but which relates to an area of your friend's expertise. Arrange your time to do adequate pre-planned and on-the-spot self-preparation for this listening event. During the lecture, concentrate to listen and to learn regardless of the complexity of the message. After the lecture, discuss what you have learned with your friend. Was the effort and hard work and preparation worth the kind and amount of knowledge gained? Would you recommend this kind of listening experience to a friend? Explain.
- Exercise 5: Within the next several days, select one day during which you will communicate by listening and responding without judging, refuting or dismissing ANY speaker's message. At the end of the day reflect on this experience. What were your feelings at the end of "Nonjudgment Day" in comparison to an ordinary day? Did any of your friends and acquaintances seem to relate and respond to you differently? What did you learn about yourself and others?

IV. and V. WHEN AND WHERE DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN?

Exercise 1: THE SPEAKER: A FILM ABOUT THE FIRST AMENDMENT

This film addresses one of the most sensitive aspects of freedom of expression: toleration of ideas we find offensive or repugnant. The purpose of the film is to encourage viewers to think and talk openly about their experiences and personal reservations about the First Amendment concept of freedom of expression. Listening instructors will find it stimulating for discussion of WHO must prepare to listen, WHEN and WHERE we are called upon to listen. The film identifies several specific instances where people did not listen, and were AFRAID to listen.

The film is produced by the American Library Association. It is artfully and professionally done with Mildred Dunnock in the leading role. Runs 45 minutes. It is available free from any State Library Association or from any University which grants an ALA approved degree.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What does this film say about the importance of listening?
 2. What does this film say about the need to be prepared to listen?
 3. What difference, if any, did you discern between the listening in formal and informal situations?
 4. What evidence did the film show that we are more afraid to LISTEN to a controversial message than to read the same message?
 5. What filtering agents and misconceptions about listening were evident in this film?
 6. What does this film say about the need to LEARN TO LISTEN?
- . Divide the group into small groups of 4-6 members. Ask them to discuss the questions among themselves and then, as a complete group, discuss the questions.

IV. and V. WHEN AND WHERE DO WE PREPARE TO LISTEN?

PERSONAL LISTENING EVALUATION

It is possible to prepare for the time WHEN we listen and also to prepare WHERE we listen. Respond to the following questions about your own preparation for WHEN and WHERE you listen by answering "yes" or "no."

WHEN DO YOU LISTEN:

- _____ 1. Do you ever make conscious decisions to NOT listen?
- _____ 2. Have you, at times, regretted that decision?
- _____ 3. Do you ever delegate a time during your busy day for listening to others?
- _____ 4. Do you find this delegation of time to be successful?
- _____ 5. Have you attempted to form the habit of being READY to listen?

WHERE DO YOU LISTEN?

- _____ 1. Do you consciously choose the place for listening when you have the opportunity?
- _____ 2. When you choose the listening environment, does it improve listening for you?
- _____ 3. Do you ever suggest moving to a more convenient place?
- _____ 4. If you cannot choose the place for listening, do you consciously attempt to improve the place where you are?
- _____ 5. Do you know your most productive listening environment?

By considering the number of "yes" versus "no" answers, you should be able to determine the degree of preparation you give to deciding when and where to listen.

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY DO WE PREPARE FOR LISTENING? A SUMMARY.

MY PERSONAL LISTENING GOALS

Just as a good speaker aims at a concrete goal rather than at an abstract one, a prospective listener will identify concrete goals in order to prepare for listening.

I. MY PERSONAL GOALS IN PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR LISTENING:

II. MY PERSONAL GOALS IN MENTAL PREPARATION FOR LISTENING:

III. MY PERSONAL GOALS IN EMOTIONAL PREPARATION FOR LISTENING:

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Argyl Publishing Corporation. Principles of Selective Listening. New York: Argyl Publishing Corp., 1968.

Some interesting exercises which can be used for preparation for listening. Emphasizes motive for listening.

Stecker, Claudell S. Listening for the Visually Impaired. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1973.

This teaching manual is divided into exercises that demonstrate and drill Readiness, Development of Skills and Development of Recall and Retention. Exercises in Section I are particularly useful in preparation for listening. An EXCELLENT collection of exercises.

Weaver, Carl H. Human Listening: Processes and Behavior. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1972.

Excellent short exercises interspersed throughout various chapters. Several are useful for preparing to listen.

Part
2

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Definition of Terms:

A Prospective Listener is one who anticipates fulfilling the role of the responsible listener.

Self-Preparation to listen is the overall analysis and modification of the listener's physical, emotional, and intellectual state for the accomplishment of a listening task.

Pre-Planned Preparation to listen is the prospective listener's effort to create a state of readiness to listen competently during a scheduled listening episode occurring in the future.

On-the-Spot or Spontaneous Preparation to listen is the prospective listener's impromptu effort to create a state of readiness to listen competently during an unscheduled listening episode occurring momentarily.

A Basic Schema of Self-Preparation to Listen: Major Components and Analytical Tools

Pre-Planned Self-Preparation to Listen

Maintenance of Bodily Health

1. Adequate Rest
2. Nutritionally Balanced Diet
3. An Effective Program of Exercise
4. A Body Free of Chronic Disease

On-the-Spot or Spontaneous Self-Preparation to Listen

Bodily Adjustment for Responsible Listening

1. Accelerated Heart Beat
2. Slightly Higher Temperature
3. Increased Secretion of Adrenalin
4. Faster Circulation of the Blood
5. Higher Level of Expended Energy

Preparing Physically to Listen

General Behavior of the Responsible Listener

1. Plan to wear proper and comfortable attire

General Behavior of the Responsible Listener

1. Select a seat permitting clear audio and visual reception

Pre-Planned Self-Preparation to Listen

2. Plan ahead for an early arrival for the listening event.
3. Do research "homework" for formal and informal listening occasions

On-the-Spot or Spontaneous Self-Preparation to Listen

2. Cooperate in controlling surrounding distractions
3. Be determined to avoid faulty listening habits, e.g., being unprepared to listen at the onset of the message; overlooking the speaker's appearance and delivery, etc.
4. Be prepared to listen to "the unexpected."

Preparing

Maintainance of Mental Health

Emotionally to Listen

1. Resolve personal problems; being able to listen to others means that our own house "must be in order"
2. Plan time for recreational activity to relieve daily stress and to keep an operational "listening mind"

Maintain Proper Attitudes and Feelings

1. Maintain an objective state of readiness to listen
2. Guard against stereotyping and prejudicial attitudes toward the speaker, topic, and occasion
3. Expect to handle emotional laden words in stride

Preparing

Increasing the Capacity to Listen

Mentally to Listen

1. Build vocabulary and add to your stock of words
2. Broaden your scope of life experiences
3. Study those disciplines to learn more about human nature (sociology, anthropology, psychology, communication, etc.)

Increasing the Capacity to Listen

1. Regardless of how short the notice, get mentally set to listen efficiently and responsibly
2. Be determined to accept the speaker and the message in an objective manner with understanding based on logical reasoning
3. Quickly assess the listening situation and concentrate immediately on decoding the speaker's initial verbal and nonverbal messages

4. During each listening experience, attempt to re-train yourself by replacing faulty listening habits with productive listening habits
5. Identify speaker motives (inform, persuade, actuate, entertain): listener motives (comprehend, evaluate, appreciate, therapy)

4. Identify speaker/listener motives

The Application of Five Analytical Tools During Self-Preparation to Listen

WHY Prepare to Listen?

1. The Boy Scout Motto, "Always be Prepared," is still in vogue.
2. The successful completion of any task requires some form of preparation--why not listening?
3. Self-preparation develops a state of readiness and a feeling of confidence in the listener.
4. Speakers prepare to speak; listeners must prepare to listen!
5. Communication is a fundamental need of humans; listeners make communication happen.
6. "Talk is cheap" but listening is priceless!
7. Self-preparation can ease the many traumatic, unpredictable listening experiences.
8. Responsible listeners enrich human life.

WHAT to Prepare to Listen?

1. The listener via Self-Preparation
Listeners are the "shapers of meaning")
2. The Listening Environment
Whenever possible, prospective listeners during either pre-planned self-preparation or spontaneous self-preparation to listen, should improve the overall physical setting of the listening act.

HOW to Prepare to Listen?

Create a feeling of anticipation and expectation about the listening event

Select the kind of self-preparation to be performed according to the listening situation and the respective modes of communication

1. Listening Alone: easiest self-preparation
 - a. Plan a specific time to listen
 - b. Change to comfortable attire

- c. Recline in a favorite chair or at a desk for note-taking
 - d. Select the type of message (classical music, entertainment monologue; a political speech, etc.)
2. Public Encounter: keep up with the "listening tide"
- a. Presence of and interaction with another person
 - b. Personalized transmission of verbal/nonverbal messages
 - c. Less stringent control over the environment loaded with a myriad of distractions
3. Group Communication: prepare to interact in developmental stages
- a. Forming
 - b. Storming
 - c. Norming
 - d. Performing
4. Public Communication: seek information
- a. Speaker's background
 - b. Purpose of message
 - c. Topic
 - d. Listening Environment

WHERE AND WHEN to Prepare to Listen?

1. The time and place for self-preparation varies with the prospective listeners and the anticipated listening event.
2. Pre-Planned Self-Preparation to listen should occur during the most feasible and opportune time and at the most convenient place for the prospective listener.
3. On-the-Spot or Spontaneous Self-Preparation to listen can occur immediately before the listening experience and right up to the utterance of the first word of the speaker's message.

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