

3 Practices To Become A Great Listener


And Why Listening Will Make You An Exceptional Leader

Every CEO wants to know how he or she can be a stronger, more efficient leader.

The science is in! Strong leaders are the most **compassionate**. But what exactly does it mean to be a compassionate CEO? It means noticing the feelings of others and acting on those observations. It means **listening** with the intent to understand, not just reply.

Start by being a better listener...

Step 1: Build Rapport



Physical Body Mirroring helps you step into what it feels like to be them. If they lean back with arms crossed, you do the same. Pause before mirroring so it's not rushed or abrasive.

Keyword And Gesture Backtracking furthers a feeling of "same as." If they say, "I'd like to go the extra mile!", while slicing the air with their hand, respond by gesturing similarly, and saying, "Yes! Let's go the extra mile."



Rapport makes everyone feel safe. This frees you up to listen to what the other party is communicating. It also frees them up to express what they're truly thinking. Rapport is about caring, not controlling or manipulating.

Step 2: Use the Meta Model



Ask questions like:

"What specifically?"

"How specifically?"

"In comparison to who/what, specifically?"




You'll often hear people use non-specific phrases such as, "I find this task too difficult". Often, we assume we understand what this means.

But without clarifying what they really mean, we can't support them effectively.

Use the Meta Model to get clarification and see the world from the other person's perspective, rather than our own.

Step 3: Make It Easier For Them To Express Themselves



Ineffective listening and communicating occurs when we have a lack of the three key emotional experiences of

safety, belonging, and mattering.

1. Lack of safety. If people don't feel safe, they may have defensive behavior, aggressive interactions, and conflict avoidance. They're too busy making sure they aren't being harmed emotionally (or physically) to listen.

2. Lack of belonging. Without belonging, people will not care to share what they want to say. And they won't care to listen to the other person either.

3. Lack of mattering. If people don't make each other feel they are important, and they matter, they won't feel heard, understood, respected.

Listening is a two-way street. What we say to someone can make it easier for them to express themselves and feel heard.



Then use what you've learned to be more compassionate so you can...



Alleviate employee suffering

Be aware of your employees and their issues. It's the compassionate response to put your employees' personal struggles on the radar, rather than dismiss them as bad for the organization.



Build trust

Focus on cultivating this trust, but don't forget to also lead by example. Leaders who exhibit compassion reinforce stronger teamwork.



Prioritize people, not business

In times of crisis, lead with transparency and put your people first. You'll be rewarded with stronger employee loyalty and trust.



When leaders use these tools to listen with compassion, they get results like these*:



67-100% Increased Employee Engagement



22%+ Increased Profit Per Employee



90%+ Increased Retention

*Stats are from over 1,000 of SmartTribes Institute's coaching and workshop clients

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