

IN SIGHT

for Oregon Lawyers

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

BE A BETTER LISTENER

Accurately perceiving your interactions and communications with others greatly enhances your effectiveness and leadership. Improving your ability to listen, in turn, is the best way to sharpen your perception skills. There are three stages of listening:

Level 1. You hear the words but interpret them in the context of how they affect you. A good example of this is the listener who immediately responds to any communication with how it's like something that happened to them.

Level 2. You hear the words and focus on what the speaker is saying. You intently listen to the words being spoken. You ask questions to seek further understanding of the situation.

Level 3. You hear the words, see the body language, and empathize with the speaker. Your questions go further than the facts as you put yourself into the speaker's position. The discourse is more satisfying for you both.

The majority of people listen at Level 1. To be truly effective, you must listen at Level 2 and Level 3 regularly. It takes practice. Start with friends. You know them better, which gives you a head start on empathizing. Focus on broadening your skills beyond your own feelings, extending them to the feelings of others.

The ultimate benefit to listening at Levels 2 and 3 is that people respond to you more positively, and you are more in tune with your surroundings. Those benefits convert directly to higher effectiveness in your interactions with others.

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