

# The Leadership Principle of Listening

“A wise man will hear and increase learning.” Proverbs 1:5



By John E. Schrock, Businessman

*Underline the key concepts found in this principle.*

Listening . . . the word listen means to make an effort to hear or pay attention, to give heed, or to take advice. The proverb says, “A wise man will hear,” meaning that if we are wise, we will be good listeners. The reason that wise men listen is because they know they become wiser by listening. Good listeners are seeking to learn more. Wisdom is not an inherited gift; rather, it is earned by listening and learning, and by observing and understanding. A good listener will usually have these four character traits:

1. They are disciplined listeners and talkers.
2. They are seekers of truth. They want to know what is right, not who is right.
3. They love quiet time—no radio, no TV, no reading, no interruptions. They like to have time to review what is inside them. They are thinkers.
4. They are full of questions. They don’t want to misunderstand or be misunderstood.

Jesus was always aware of being misunderstood. That’s why He said, “He that has an ear, let him hear.” He meant, “Don’t just hear My words, comprehend and understand the idea and get the concept of what I’m trying to say.” All good teachers try to communicate certain concepts, but they don’t always use the right words. So we hear the words, but don’t get the bottom line. That’s why good listeners will probe by asking questions. If we

are not disciplined listeners, we won’t get the point. Sometimes we think that people around us hear what we are saying, only to find out later that they thought we meant something else.

Listening is not enough—we must hear. Listening is not hearing until we fully understand what the other party is trying to convey to us. Television only communicates in part, for it only works one way. Telephones are a better system of communication, for we hear and respond. Fax machines, on the other hand, are perfect in communication: the receiving machine receives exactly what the sending machine transmitted. But we are not like fax machines. We measure and judge the words of others by our own perceptions and emotions (our state of being). We hear the words, then form our own perceptions based on what we think we heard, and interpret it with our feelings from our past experiences. Everything we hear goes through a process of our hurts and disappointments, and we then judge accordingly. That’s what we call “reading into it”. Someone will take something we said, and they will say that we were talking about them, when it was

not even in our mind.

If we are going to be successful in building business and personal relationships, we will need to take the initiative to listen until we know where people are and what they need. Discovering needs is the first step in helping others. We will learn their needs if we can listen. Wise men become wise by listening, and they will keep on listening because they see the value in it.

A good way to make sure we understand someone is to ask him, “Is this what you are trying to tell me?” or “Is this what you mean?” Don’t be too proud to ask for clarity. It is time well spent, and will avoid a lot of hurts and confusion.

*This principle is part of the one year character development program:*

**Foundations For Achievement.**

## Thoughts to Ponder:

A good man will always increase in learning and understanding for he knows his life and the future depend on it.

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed