

# QUICK TIPS

## Am I a Good Listener?

Evaluate your listening style by asking yourself ...

### Attitudes

Do I like to listen to others talk?

Do I encourage others to talk?

Do I listen even if I do not like the person who is talking?

Do I listen equally well whether the person is a man or woman, young or old?

Do I listen equally well to a friend, acquaintance, and stranger?

### Actions

Do I put what I have been doing out of sight and mind?

Do I look at the speaker?

Do I ignore distractions?

Do I smile, nod my head, and otherwise encourage the person to talk?

Do I think about what the person is saying?

Do I try to figure out what the person means?

Do I try to figure out what people are really saying?

Do I let others finish what they are trying to say?

Do I encourage the person to go on if there is hesitation?

Do I restate what the person has said and ask if I got it right?

Do I withhold judgment about the ideas until the person has finished?

Do I listen regardless of the manner of speaking and choice of words?

Do I listen even though I anticipate what the person is going to say?

Do I ask questions in order to get the person to explain the idea more fully?

Do I ask what the words mean as the person uses them?

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BITS** are available on the following topics:

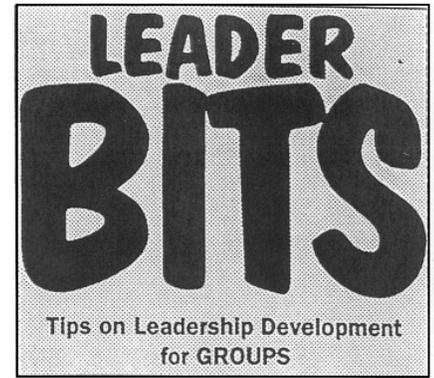
- Advising Groups
- Agendas
- Assertiveness
- Brainstorming
- Co-Sponsorship with Other Groups
- Communication
- Community Service
- Conflict Resolution
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- Delegation
- Difficult Members
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- Team Building
- Time Management
- University Events

**LEADER  
BITS**

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"There is a story of a little boy who, one night at dinner, suddenly picked up his plate and smashed it on the floor. His mother sent him upstairs to his room. The next evening at dinner the father said to the family: 'I want you to hear something. Last night I discovered I had left my dictating machine on during dinner. By chance I recorded our conversation just before Johnny threw his plate on the floor. Listen to what went on.' The father turned on the recorder. There were sounds of laughter and small talk. Then in the background could be heard a tiny voice, 'Pass the butter!' No one seemed to hear the small voice so it came again, 'Please, pass the butter!' Still the laughter and talk continued. Again came the wee voice, not much louder, 'Please, pass the butter!' Nothing happened. Finally there was the sound of the crashing plate. Life is filled with tiny voices often lost beneath the noise and clatter of a busy world. The people who manage life successfully are those who listen carefully to the wee voices and who are alert for the small things. Never overlook the details. Someday when you least expect it, one of the tiny things could change your life."

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*Communication is the key to relationships. Good communication builds mutual confidence and trust. Bad communication causes mishaps, confusion, and distrust.*

## **TEN GUIDELINES TO GOOD COMMUNICATION**

- 1. I will be sure I understand what I want to say.**
  - What is the real purpose of my message?
  - What do I expect the receiver to do?
- 2. I will clarify my ideas before I attempt to communicate them.**
  - Can I accurately say what I want to say?
  - Am I interesting? Meaningful?
  - How many ideas should I include?
  - What is the minimum number of ideas I must get across?
- 3. I will state my message as simply as possible.**
  - Is technical language imperative or would simpler language be better?
  - Will the words I use mean the same to the receiver as they do to me?
  - Will a picture or graphic help convey the message?
  - Have I been as brief as desirable?
- 4. I will consider the entire environment affecting my communication.**
  - What impression does my form of the message convey?
  - When and where will the message be received?
  - How will the time and location affect the interpretation?
  - Is it necessary to use several methods to get the message across?
- 5. I will be aware of the receiver.**
  - Can I capitalize upon his/her known needs or interests to improve understanding?
  - Can I get the message from his/her viewpoint and understand it?
  - Am I telling the receiver all he/she needs to know?
- 6. I will consider the overtones of the my message as well as the intended message.**
  - Does the "tone" of the message say more than the basic content?
  - Can various interpretations of meaning cause my message to be misunderstood?
- 7. I will provide for and encourage feedback.**
  - Can the receiver easily tell me what was understood?
  - Can he/she ask for more information?
  - How can someone report personal feelings/actions resulting from my message?
- 8. I will follow-up my communication.**
  - When I finished my message, was it complete?
  - How will I know when it is complete, how successful it was, or what further steps I'll need to take?
- 9. I will be sure my actions support my communication.**
  - Do I do as I say?
  - Does my body language support my message?
- 10. I will seek not only to be understood, but also to understand. I will be a good listener.**
  - Do I concentrate when I listen?
  - Do I understand what the other person is really saying?
  - Am I listening or just hearing?
  - What feedback should I give the message I hear?

Ten Guidelines of Good Communication - source unknown

\*(story on front) Excerpt from Hearing the Small Voices by Bishop Ernest A. Fitzgerald