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Member Resource

Title:	Tape Recorder
Shared by: (Your Name, State, Country)	Judy Lehr Guarino, St. Augustine, FL Craig Martin
Email Address:	jbguarino@gmail.com
Type of Activity or Resource:	Activity
Objective:	To increase the participants listening skills and develop awareness that listening is difficult.
Recommended Age Group:	elementary-adult
Materials Needed:	
Time:	40 minutes
Additional Notes:	

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Strategy 22 Tape Recorder

Objective(s):

To increase the participants' listening skills and develop an awareness that listening is difficult.

Age:

Elementary to adult

Procedure:

1. Ask each participant to find a partner.
2. Decide who is going to be "A" and who is "B."
3. Ask the A's to raise their hands and say, "You are to share a brief story about a warm or special moment in your life with your partner. You only have one minute to share the story. Begin with this sentence starter: 'A special moment in my life was. . . .'"
4. Give the A's a minute to think about a story.
5. Ask the B's to raise their hands. Explain that they are the tape recorder for A's story. Tell them they will have 30 seconds to repeat the story.
6. Say "Go" and time them for one minute.
7. Say "Stop" and tell the B's to rewind the tape recorder. Now ask the B's to repeat exactly what they heard the A's say.
8. After 30 seconds say, "Stop the recorder," and ask the A's to give the B's feedback.
9. Change roles.
10. Process by discussing, "Is it difficult to be an effective listener? Why?"
11. Pass out handouts
 - 22.A, "The How-to Guide for Effective Listening" [page 65].
 - 22.B, "Ten Commandments for Effective Listening" [page 66].
12. Discuss.

The How-to Guide for Effective Listening

Why Listening is Hard

Immediately after the average person has listened to someone talk, he or she remembers only a small bit of what was heard—no matter how carefully that person was listening. Two months later, the listener will remember only about one-fourth of what was said.

In fact, we tend to FORGET A THIRD TO A HALF of the content within EIGHT HOURS. We usually lose more in this short interval than we do in the next six months.

We often assume that listening depends upon intelligence, but a poor listener might be an intelligent person.

The PROBLEM IS that WE THINK much FASTER THAN we TALK. The average rate of speech for most Americans is around 125 words per minute. The human brain, with more than 13 billion cells, continues thinking at very high speed, while the spoken words come in at what is, by comparison a "snail's pace."

Our brain continues to assemble other thoughts while receiving ideas that are spoken to us.

To say it another way, we can listen and still have some spare time for thinking. Our use, or misuse, of this spare thinking time determines how well we take in and retain.

How to Improve Listening Behavior

1. Listen to difficult material.
2. Determine the purpose behind the communication situation and your role.
3. Create an interest in the subject.
4. Give the speaker your undivided attention.
5. Keep your emotions in check.
6. Listen primarily for ideas and patterns of reasoning.
7. Listen as if you are a tape recorder that will be rewound for the speaker.

Ten Commandments for Good Listening

1. **STOP TALKING**
You can't listen if you are talking.
2. **PUT THE TALKER AT EASE**
Help the talker feel that he or she is free to talk.
3. **SHOW HIM OR HER THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN**
Look and act interested. Listen to understand.
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS**
Don't doodle, tap or shuffle papers. Close the door.
5. **EMPATHIZE WITH HIM OR HER**
Try to put yourself in the talker's place so that you can see his or her point of view.
6. **BE PATIENT**
Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt.
7. **HOLD YOUR TEMPER**
An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words.
8. **GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM**
Don't argue; even if you win, you lose.
9. **ASK QUESTIONS**
Questions encourage the talker and show you are listening. It helps to develop points further.
10. **STOP TALKING**
This is first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. You can't listen while you are talking.