



Choosing to Step Up:

Growing Your Influence Through Listening & Speaking Up

Key Points:

1. Listening is rated highly as a reason for promotion
2. Listening improves relationships and drives innovation
3. Most of us have little training in listening
4. Nonverbal communication is more impactful than our words
5. Remember what we “intend” to communicate is not always what people “decode”

Tips for Listening Better

Practice full attention with people: not distracted, no phones, focus. Remember the research about physicians; when we demonstrate presence, people feel we have spent more time with them than we actually have.

In meetings, build on the points of others and encourage listening when you see it isn't happening

When someone gives you feedback, lean into openness and curiosity rather than defending and explaining. Instead of saying “Thank you, but” say “Thank you, tell me more.” Remember that even if the feedback is only ten percent on target, you will build the relationship and learn more by focusing on being curious rather than defending.

When communicating, take the time to check that the message you sent is what was received and also what was heard. Paraphrase what the person said to you and ask, “Did I get that right, what did I miss?” When giving important messages, say “I'd love to hear what you heard me say so I know I communicated effectively.”

Tips for Speaking Up

People who speak up at work and bring ideas are more highly rated than those who stay silent

Speaking up is not the same as “complaining.” Complaining is identifying problems without solutions, focusing on what others have contributed to the problem and what they need to do about it. Constructive speaking up is offering solutions, taking ownership of your part in the problem or issue and showing how you are willing to be part of the solution.

Speaking up makes organizations better when we bring our ideas forward.

Take a chance: raise your hand, bring your ideas. Play to win rather than playing “not to lose.” Remember those who bring ideas and offer challenges add value.

Be aware when you are speaking up of whether you are being constructive or complaining. Notice when other people do the same as a way of growing that mental awareness of the difference.

Reflection:

How are you doing with that personal brand/how you are showing up? What are you noticing? Are you making progress?

Be aware of practicing presence and deeply listening this week.