

News Column for Use Week of 4/29/19
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Listening Habits – A Self-Assessment

The last time it was my turn to write the River Valley District News Column, I shared some information on the importance of developing good listening skills. I also wrote about the Five Levels of Listening I had learned at a K-State Research and Extension professional development session last fall. As promised, this Column is dedicated to the Listening Habits Self-Assessment which was shared during that session. Your answers to the assessment questions will help you discover where you have developed listening habits that may keep you from being a good listener. By doing so, we can identify things we need to work on. Just quickly answer “yes” or “no” to the following questions.

1. Science says you think four times faster than a person usually talks to you. Do you use this time to turn your thoughts elsewhere while keeping general track of the conversation?
2. If you feel it would take too much time and effort to understand something, do you go out of your way to avoid hearing about it?
3. If you want to remember what someone is saying, do you think it is a good idea to write it down?
4. Do your thoughts turn to other subjects when you believe a speaker will have nothing of interest to say?
5. Can you tell by a person’s appearance and delivery that he or she is not worth listening to?
6. When you are puzzled or annoyed by what someone says, do you try to get the question straightened out immediately, either in your mind or by interrupting the speaker?
7. Do certain words, phrases, or ideas prejudice you against the speaker so you cannot listen objectively to what is being said?
8. Do you listen primarily for facts, rather than ideas, when someone is speaking?
9. When people are talking to you, do you try to make them think you are paying attention when you are not?
10. When you are listening, are you easily distracted by sights and sounds around you?

If you answered “no” to every question, you are a perfect listener. However, each “yes” shows a specific habit you should work to change, if you want to improve the listening portion of your communication.

We often think of good communicators as those who speak easily and well in front of groups of people, or those who write eloquently. In reality, good listening skills are the base upon which we build good communication skills. For questions, please contact John Forshee by calling the River Valley District, Clay Center Office at 785-632-5335 or email jforshee@ksu.edu.